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DCEEN-104

History of English Literature

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BLOCK-I INTRODUCTION

This block focuses on the study of literature from the Renaissance to the Eighteenth Century. Learners will study the literary and social background of these periods as well as the role and contribution of different litterateurs. Additionally, this block aims also to provide an insight into the social background of the British Society during the Renaissance to the Eighteenth Century. Throughout these periods British Society Underwent significant changes that impacted the lives of the English people. This period represents one of the most transformative eras in human history, spanning roughly from the 14th Century to the late 18th Century. Beginning with the cultural rebirth of the Renaissance, this timeframe witnessed unprecedented changes in art, science, philosophy, politics, and society that fundamentally reshaped the Western World and beyond. The present block is divided into the following five units:

Unit – 1 deals with the Renaissance and the Reformation having their social, political and economic impact on the lives of the British people. It starts with an introductory note on the Renaissance and proceeds with its Italian Beginnings and Humanism. It further focuses on the Renaissance art and artist and their several works, invention of the printing press, impact of the Renaissance on the English Literature, the rise of the Reformation, its social and historical background, major reformers and ends it with the impact of the Reformation on literature and society.

Unit – 2 is devoted to the study of the University Wits along with their renowned woks and impact of their literary output on the British Literature and Society. Emerged in late 16th century, University Wits, a group of English playwrights and pamphleteers are well-known for their remarkable contribution to the progress of English Drama and Literature, especially during the Elizabethan Age. They are seven in numbers and are recognized for laying the groundwork for later playwrights like William Shakespeare. Their works helped in establishing blank verse and tragic drama as significant forms in English Literature.

Unit – 3 focuses on the Metaphysical Poetry, its meaning and definition, its main characteristics and its major practitioners along with their important works. Metaphysical poetry was in vogue in the 17th-century and characterized by its intellectual and philosophical themes, use of conceits (elaborate metaphors), and exploration of spiritual and physical aspects of love and existence. This kind of poetry is known for its complex thought, dramatic language, and unconventional imagery. Literary critic and poet Samuel Johnson was the first to use the term 'Metaphysical Poetry' in his book *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets* (1179-1781). In this book there are mentioned - John Donne, George Herbert, Richard Crashaw, Andrew Marvell and Henry Vaughan.

Unit – 4 concentrates on the Neo-Classicism or the Augustan Age, its literary characteristics, major poets, major novelists and major prose writers with their significant works. It was a Western classical movement, especially in the fields of decorative and visual arts, literature, music, architecture and theatre that rely heavily for inspiration on the Classical Models (Ancient Rome and Greece). It was in direct reaction against the sensuous and frivolously decorative Rococo style of European art and literature.

Unit – 5 deals with Elizabethan Songs and Sonnets. The main aim of the unit is to introduce learners with the art of poetic composition especially with the art of sonneteering. This unit further proceeds with the writers and their important works of the Age. A new vigour in poetry was celebrated by the Elizabethan Age's rich poetic output. Both the sonnet form and lyric poetry flourished during this time. Sir Thomas Wyatt brought the Elizabethan sonnet to England. It originated from the Italian or Petrarchan sonnet. The English sonnet transformed the Italian form, which normally consists of an octave (eight lines) and a sestet (six lines), into quatrains and a

couplet. Many songs, frequently arranged to music and performed in a variety of contexts, such as plays and courtly assemblies, were also written during the Elizabethan period. These songs frequently echoed the sonnets' themes of beauty, love, and sorrow.

UNIT-1

THE RENAISSANCE AND THE REFORMATION

Structure

1.0 OBJECTIVES

This Unit deals with a very momentous period of the European history which initiated major changes not only in economy, society and polity but in overall outlook towards human beings and nature. After reading this Unit you should be able to learn about:

- The economic and social factors which contributed to the process of the Renaissance
- The ideas, values and institutions associated with the Renaissance

- The art and Artists of this period
- The process which led to the rise of modern-state in Europe, and the expansion of the European powers to other regions of the world that led to colonization
- The concept of the Reformation and its historical origins
- The social background of the Reformation
- The Blowout of the Reformation
- The impact of the Reformation in the social, political and economic spheres

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Renaissance was a time of rebirth, revival and reawakening in creativity in Europe in the 1300s. It brought revolution in several extents whether political, social, economic, and cultural (traditions in art, literature, etc.). The most important changes, as we came to know, were the alterations in the way that the people observed themselves and their world. During this time, there was an improved interest in standard learning, especially the culture of the ancient Rome. It was a time of reawakening after the chaos and disunity of the Middle Ages.

It also seems that some essentials of the Middle Ages persisted however. After all, the Middle Ages had preserved much of the classical heritage. It is seen that Latin had persisted as the Church's language and of cultured people. On the other hand, Euclid's Mathematics, Ptolemy's the astronomy, and Aristotle's works were well preserved as well and carried on during the Renaissance. Though the Renaissance did produce new approaches toward principles and learning. Dissimilar from medieval scholars, who discussed the nature of life after death, thinkers of the Renaissance were excited to discover the potency and variation of human experience. At the same time, there was a new emphasis on individual achievement. Indeed, the Renaissance ideal was the person with talent in many fields.

The Renaissance supported a spirit of adventure and a wide-ranging curiosity that led people to explore new worlds. Columbus, who sailed to the Americas in 1492, represented that spirit. So did Nicolaus Copernicus, the scientist who revolutionized the way people viewed the universe. Renaissance writers and artists, eager to experiment with new forms, were also products of that adventurous spirit.

1.2 ITALIAN BEGINNINGS

The Renaissance began in Italy in the mid-1300s, then blowout the North to the rest of Europe. It reached its height in the 1500's. It began in Italy because Italy was the center of ancient Roman history. Architectural remains, antique statues, coins and inscriptions were all visible reminders to Italians of the "glory that was Rome." Italy also differed from the rest of Europe, as its cities had survived the middle Ages. In the North, cities like Florence, Milan, Venice, and Genoa grew into prosperous centers of trade and manufacturing. Rome, in Central Italy, and Naples in the South, also contributed to the Renaissance cultural revival. Finally, a wealthy and powerful merchant class in these city-states further promoted the cultural rebirth. These merchants exerted both political and economic leadership, and their attitudes and interests helped to shape the Italian Renaissance. They stressed education and individual achievement. They also spent lavishly to support the art.

Florence and the Medicis: The city of Florence, perhaps more than any other city, came to symbolize the Italian Renaissance. Florence was home to many gifted poets, artists, architects, scholars, and scientists in a short space of time.

In the 1400s, the Medici family of Florence organized a banking business. The business prospered, and the family expanded into wool manufacturing, mining and other ventures. Soon, the Medicis ranked amongst the richest merchants and bankers in Europe. This money gave the family cultural and political power. Cosimo de' Medici gained control of the Florentine government in 1434, and the family continued as uncrowned rulers of the city for many years.

Best known of all the Medicis was Cosimo's grandson, Lorenzo. He was a generous patron, or financial supporter of the arts. Poets and philosophers frequently visited the Medici palace. Artists like Michelangelo learned their craft by sketching ancient Roman statues collected in the Medici gardens.

1.3 HUMANISM

At the heart of the Renaissance there was an intellectual movement known as Humanism. Humanism focused on worldly subjects rather than on religious issues that had occupied medieval thinkers. Humanist scholars hoped to use the wisdom of the ancients to increase their understanding of their own times. Renaissance art reflected humanist concerns. Like artists of the Middle Ages, Renaissance artists portrayed religious figures such as Mary, Jesus, and the Saints. However, they often set these figures against Greek or Roman backgrounds. Painters also produced portraits of well-known figures of the day, reflecting the humanist interest in individual achievement. Renaissance artists learned the rules of perspective. By making distant objects smaller than those close to the viewer, artists could paint scenes that appeared three-dimensional. They also used shading to make objects look round and real. Renaissance artists studied human anatomy and drew from live models. This made it possible for them to portray the human body more accurately than Medieval artists had done.

1.4 RENAISSANCE ART AND ARTISTS

1.4.1 Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519)

Leonardo da Vinci (also known as Leonardo di ser Piero da Vinci) was an Italian Polymath of the High Renaissance who was active as painter, draughtsman, engineer, scientist, theorist, sculptor and architect. He was born in 1452. His most popular painting is the Mona Lisa. He made sketches of nature and models of undersea boats and flying machines-Dissected corpses (dead bodies) to learn how bones and muscles work. Some facts about him are-

- Trained in Florence.
- Is best known as a painter, but did absolutely everything else as well.
- Studied human anatomy, via dissection (completely illegal, unless one was a physician), and used the knowledge of such to glorify man.
- Believed only in that which he could observe.
- Had a Duke (of Milan) as his first patron.
- Painted beautiful women, most of whom seemed to be enjoying delicious secrets.
- Disliked Michelangelo, but was somewhat of a mentor (albeit unseen) to Raphael.
- Worked in Rome from 1513 to 1516.

- Was commissioned by Pope Leo X.

1.4.2 Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564)

Michelangelo di Lodovici Buonarroti Simoni is known as Michelangelo was an Italian Sculptor, Painter, Architect and Poet of the High Renaissance. He was born in the republic of Florence. He shaped stone into masterpieces like Pieta, which captures the sorrow of Mary as she cradles the dead Christ on her knees. He also sculpted David- a statue of the biblical shepherd who killed the giant Goliath. Some key points are as follows:

- Trained in Florence.
- Is best known as a painter and sculptor, but worked in architecture and wrote poetry as well.
- Studied human anatomy, via dissection (completely illegal, unless one was a physician), and used the knowledge of such to glorify God.
- Believed deeply and devoutly in God.
- Had a Medici (Lorenzo) as his first patron.
- Painted women who looked a lot like men with breasts slapped on.
- Disliked Leonardo, but was somewhat of a reluctant mentor to Raphael.
- Worked in Rome 1496-1501, 1505, 1508-1516 and from 1534 until his death in 1564.
- Was commissioned by Popes Julius II, Leo X, Clement VII, Paul III Farnese, Clement VIII and Pius III.

1.4.3 Raphael (1483-1520)

Raffaelo Sanzio da Urbino best known as Raphael was an Italian Painter and architect of the High Renaissance. Raphel studied the works of Da Vinci and Michelangelo. He blended Christian and Classical styles. He was Well-known for School of Athens, pictures of an imaginary gathering of great thinkers and scientists, including Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates. In this painting, Raphael includes his face, Da Vinci’s face, and Michelangelo’s face. He is best known for his tender portrayal of the Madonna. Few concepts about him are as follows:

- Trained in Umbria, but studied in Florence (where he picked up his draftsmanship and compositional skills by studying Leonardo and Michelangelo's works).
- Is best known as a painter, but worked in architecture as well.
- Studied human anatomy only to the extent that his figures were proportionately correct.
- Believed in God, but didn't alienate the Humanists or Neo-Platonists.
- Had, as his first patrons, those who actually wanted either Leonardo or Michelangelo (whose time, respectively, was being monopolized by their patrons), but settled for Raphael.
- Painted beautiful, gentle, calm women in a courteous manner.
- Idolized Leonardo and managed to get along with Michelangelo (no mean feat, that).
- Worked in Rome from 1508 until his death in 1520.
- Was commissioned by Popes Julius II and Leo X. 1.5

1.5 RENAISSANCE LITERATURE

Renaissance writers, poets, artists, and scholars met and mingled with politicians at the courts of the Renaissance rulers. A literature of "how to" books sprang up to help ambitious men and women who wanted to rise in the Renaissance world.

1.5.1 Baldassare Castiglione

The most widely read book during the Renaissance was "The Book of the Courtier". Castiglione's ideal courtier was a well-educated, well-mannered aristocrat who has mastered many fields, from poetry to music and sports. The ideal differed for men and women. The ideal man is athletic, but not overactive. He is good at games, but not a gambler. He plays a musical instrument and knows literature and history, but he is not arrogant. The ideal woman offers a balance to men. She is graceful and kind, lively but reserved. She is pure but not prudish. She is beautiful.

1.5.2 Niccolo Machiavelli

Machiavelli wrote a different kind of handbook. He served Florence as a diplomat and had observed kings and princes in foreign courts. He also had studied ancient Roman history. In "The Prince", published in 1513, Machiavelli combined his personal experiences of politics with his knowledge of the past to offer a guide to rulers on how to gain and maintain power. He took a look at real rulers in an age of ruthless power politics. He stressed that the end justifies the means. He urged rulers to use whatever methods were necessary to achieve their goals.

1.5.3 Desiderius Erasmus

Erasmus was a Dutch humanist who used his knowledge of classical languages to produce a new Greek edition of the New Testament and a much-improved Latin translation of the same text. He also called for a translation of the Bible into the everyday language of the people. Erasmus also called for reforms (changes) in the Church. He challenged the worldliness of Church practices and urged a return to early Christian traditions. His best known work is "The Praise of Folly". In this work, he uses humour to expose the ignorance and immoral behavior of many people of his day, including the clergy (Church Officials).

1.5.4 Sir Thomas More

An English humanist, Sir Thomas More wrote Utopia, which describes an ideal society, where men and women live in peace and harmony. Private property does not exist in More's Utopia. No one is idle, all are educated, and justice is used to end crime rather than to eliminate the criminal.

1.5.5 Francois Rabelais

A French humanist, Rabelais had a varied career as a monk, physician, Greek scholar, and author. In his novel,Gargantua and Pantagruel, he chronicles the adventures of two gentle giants, Gargantua and his son, Pantagruel. On the surface, Rabelais's book is a comic adventure of travel and war. But, he uses his characters to offer opinions on a wide variety of serious subjects, such as education and religion.

1.5.6 William Shakespeare

Shakespeare was an English poet and playwright. Between 1590 and 1613. He wrote 37 plays that are still performed around the world. Shakespeare's comedies, such as "A Midsummer

Night's Dream", laughs at the follies and joys of young people in love. His history plays, such as "Richard III", chronicle the power struggles of English Kings. His tragedies show human beings crushed by powerful forces or their own weakness. In "Romeo and Juliet", two teenagers fall victim to an old family feud. In "Othello", a noble warrior is driven mad by jealousy. In "Macbeth", he depicts an ambitious couple whose desire for political power leads them to commit murder.

1.5.7 Miguel de Cervantes

Best known for his entertaining tale that mocks romantic notions of medieval chivalry called "Don Quixote". The novel follows the adventures of Don Quixote, a foolish but idealistic knight, and his faithful servant, Sancho Panza. Quixote imagines himself involved in one dangerous adventure after another. Panza tries without success to convince the knight that the "castles" he sees are really humble inns and the "jousting knights" that he tries to fight are in fact windmills. Quixote, however, is unable to understand the modern world, which requires the skills of practical men like Sancho Panza rather than those of romantic and battle-ready knights.

1.6 THE PRINTING PRESS

The great works of the Renaissance reached a large audience. The way this was possible was through the development of printing in Europe. The Chinese had learnt to make paper and had printed books centuries earlier. By 1300, methods of paper making had reached Europe. By the 1400s, German engravers had developed movable type. In 1456, Johann Gutenberg of Mainz, Germany, printed a complete edition of the Bible using movable metal type. With the Gutenberg Bible, the European age of printing had begun.

The printing revolution brought many changes. Books printed with movable type on rag paper were cheaper and easier to produce than hand-copied works. As books became more readily available, more people learnt to read and write. They also gained access to a broad range of knowledge as presses churned out books on topics from medicine and law to astrology, mining, and geography.

1.7 IMPACT OF THE RENAISSANCE ON THE ENGLISH LITERATURE

During the Renaissance, the English literature gained greater psychological complexity. The Middle Ages was largely dominated by plays more interested in imparting morals or presenting religious stories than anything else. Around the Fifteenth and Sixteenth centuries, humanism—a system more interested in human affairs than what might occur after death—was on the rise.

Poetry flourished during this period. English poets were inspired by Italian poetry in particular. Edmund Spenser sought to write his own national epic in The Faerie Queene, a work as Protestant as Dante Alighieri's The Divine Comedy is Catholic. Shakespeare penned his famous collection of sonnets during this period as well.

English drama of this period was heavily influenced by the theatre of the ancient Greeks and Romans, a trend followed by science, visual arts, and philosophy, which also took cues from antiquity during the Renaissance. The Roman playwright Seneca was a big influence on English tragedies, particularly "revenge tragedies" such as The Spanish Tragedy or Hamlet. These plays tended to have their characters brought low not by bad fortune or supernatural temptations, but through bad decisions or fatal flaws already present within the hearts of the characters, much as the tragedians of antiquity did. Comedies used similar situations and character types as the Greek/Roman farces as well.

A play like "Hamlet" is a perfect example of how the Renaissance affected English literature: a medieval version of this story might have rendered Hamlet's inner turmoil as mere good versus evil, while, as it is, the play is psychologically complicated and more ambiguous regarding the morality of its cast of characters, many of whom do not fit into simple "bad" or "good" categories. The Renaissance makes a great effect on the development of English literature. In 1564, the Italian Renaissance was over but the English Renaissance had hardly begun. The age of Shakespeare was the era of Renaissance in England. It was an important movement that illuminated the whole English literature. Classical language and learning were popularized. Paradise Lost is the last great triumph of the Renaissance.

1.8 THE REFORMATION

The greatest leaders of the Reformation undoubtedly were Martin Luther and John Calvin. Martin Luther precipitated the Reformation with his critiques of both the practices and the theology of the Roman Catholic Church. John Calvin was the most important figure in the second generation of the Reformation, and his interpretation of Christianity, known as Calvinism, deeply influenced many areas of Protestant thought. Other figures included Pope Leo X, who excommunicated Luther; the Holy Roman emperor Charles V, who essentially declared war on Protestantism; Henry VIII, King of England, who presided over the establishment of an independent Church of England; and Huldrych Zwingli, a Swiss reformer and Swiss theologian who challenged the authority of the Catholic Church and emphasized the importance of the Bible as the sole source of religious authority. He advocated for justification by faith alone, meaning that salvation is achieved through faith in Jesus Christ rather than through good works. Zwingli also differed from Martin Luther on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, believing that Christ was only symbolically present in the bread and wine, not physically, according to Britannica. Reformation also called Protestant Reformation, the religious revolution that took place in the Western Church in the 16th Century. Its greatest leaders undoubtedly were Martin Luther and John Calvin. Having far-reaching political, economic, and social effects, the Reformation became the basis for the founding of Protestantism, one of the three major branches of Christianity.

1.8.1 The Social Background

The world of the late Medieval Roman Catholic Church from which the 16th- Century Reformers emerged was a complex one. Over the centuries the church, particularly in the office of the papacy, had become deeply involved in the political life of Western Europe. The resulting intrigues and political manipulations, combined with the Church's increasing power and wealth, contributed to the bankrupting of the Church as a spiritual force. Abuses such as the sale of indulgences (or spiritual privileges) by the clergy and other charges of corruption undermined the Church's spiritual authority. These instances must be seen as exceptions, however, no matter how much they were played up by polemicists. For most people, the Church continued to offer spiritual comfort. There is some evidence of anticlericalism, but the Church at large enjoyed loyalty as it had before. One development is clear: the political authorities increasingly sought to curtail the public role of the church and thereby triggered tension.

1.8.2 The Reformation in Germany

The Reformation of the 16th Century was not unprecedented. Reformers within the Medieval Church such as St. Francis of Assisi, Valdes (founder of the Waldensians), Jan Hus, and John Wycliffe addressed aspects in the life of the Church in the Centuries before 1517. In the 16th Century Erasmus of Rotterdam, a great humanist scholar was the chief proponent of Liberal Catholic reform that attacked popular superstitions in the Church and urged the imitation

of Christ as the supreme moral teacher. These figures reveal an ongoing concern for renewal within the Church in the years before Luther is said to have posted his Ninety-five Theses on the door of the Castle Church, Wittenberg, Germany, on October 31, 1517, the eve of All Saints' Day—the traditional date for the beginning of the Reformation.

Martin Luther claimed that what distinguished him from previous reformers was that while they attacked corruption in the life of the Church, he went to the theological root of the problem—the perversion of the Church's doctrine of redemption and grace. Luther, a pastor and professor at the University of Wittenberg, deplored the entanglement of God's free gift of grace in a complex system of indulgences and good works. In his Ninety-five Theses, he attacked the indulgence system, insisting that the Pope had no authority over purgatory and that the doctrine of the merits of the saints had no foundation in the gospel. Here lay the key to Luther's concerns for the ethical and theological reform of the Church: Scripture alone is authoritative (*sola scriptura*) and justification is by faith (*sola fide*), not by works. While he did not intend to break with the Catholic Church, a confrontation with the papacy was not long in coming. In 1521 Luther was excommunicated; what began as an internal reform movement had become a fracture in western Christendom.

The Reformation Movement within Germany diversified almost immediately, and other reform impulses arose independently of Luther. Huldrych Zwingli built a Christian theocracy in Zürich in which church and state joined for the service of God. Zwingli agreed with Luther in the centrality of the doctrine of justification by faith, but he espoused a different understanding of the Holy Communion. Luther had rejected the Catholic Church's doctrine of transubstantiation, according to which the bread and wine in Holy Communion became the actual body and blood of Christ. According to Luther's notion, the body of Christ was physically present in the elements because Christ is present everywhere, while Zwingli claimed that entailed a spiritual presence of Christ and a declaration of faith by the recipients.

Another group of reformers, often though not altogether correctly referred to as "radical reformers," insisted that baptism be performed not on infants but on adults who had professed their faith in Jesus. Called Anabaptists, they remained a marginal phenomenon in the 16th Century but survived—despite fierce persecution—as Mennonites and Hutterites into the 21st Century. Opponents of the ancient Trinitarian dogma made their appearance as well. Known as Socinians, after the name of their founder, they established flourishing congregations, especially in Poland.

Another important form of Protestantism (as those protesting against their suppressions were designated by the Diet of Speyer in 1529) is Calvinism, named for John Calvin, a French lawyer who fled France after his conversion to the Protestant cause. In Basel, Switzerland, Calvin brought out the first edition of his Institutes of the Christian Religion in 1536, the first systematic, theological treatise of the new reform movement. Calvin agreed with Luther's teaching on justification by faith. However, he found a more positive place for law within the Christian community than did Luther. In Geneva, Calvin was able to experiment with his ideal of a disciplined community of the elect. Calvin also stressed the doctrine of predestination and interpreted Holy Communion as a spiritual partaking of the body and blood of Christ. Calvin's tradition merged eventually with Zwingli's into the Reformed tradition, which was given theological expression by the (Second) Helvetic Confession of 1561.

1.8.3 Impact of the Reformation

The Reformation had significant effects for England. The monarch became the head of the Protestant Church of England, monasteries were abolished and their wealth confiscated, and there were significant changes in Church services, notably the use of the English language and not Latin.

The English Reformation split the Church in England from the Roman Catholic Church and the Pope. The Protestant Church of England was established and the English monarch became its supreme head not the Pope. The monks and nuns were kicked out of their cloisters and possessions were sold off (Norton 671). Important aspects is the result of the Protestant Reformation was that sin was forgiven through faith in God instead of the sale of indulgences, and scripture was taught in the common language instead of in Latin.

1.9 LET'S SUM UP

Renaissance and Reformation set into motion a process that revolutionized the outlook of human beings on religion, society, political systems and culture. This process was the product of several socio-economic changes, such as the emergence of civic freedom in towns and cities, formation of occupational guilds, development of sea borne trade, geographical discoveries, etc. The Renaissance marked the rise of humanism which shifted the focus from divine principles to human beings. The human body was no more treated as a symbol of sin. It was now considered a thing of beauty, dignity and pleasure. This outlook generated new writings and literature, art and architecture where the emphasis was on beauty and aesthetic standards in relation to human conditions.

With the promotion of secular ideas and rational thinking, the doors for the development of modern science were thrown open. The conflict between Church and Science ultimately resulted in favour of Science. The sanction of the Church was no more required for the promotion and recognition of scientific discoveries. The forces of Reformation challenged the abuse of authority by the Church. This not only resulted in the emergence of national Churches, but also compelled the Church hierarchy to introduce reforms, i.e. the Counter Reformation.

In this way the English Reformation began with Henry VIII of England (r. 1509-1547 CE) and continued in stages over the rest of the 16th Century CE. The process witnessed the break away from the Catholic Church headed by the Pope in Rome. The Protestant Church of England was thus established and the English Monarch became its supreme head. Other consequences included the dissolution of the monasteries, the abolition of the Mass, the use of the English language in Services and in the Bible used, the replacement of altars with communion tables, and a general doing away of the more decorative and showy elements of Catholicism both within Services and the Churches themselves. The majority of people went along with the change, the rich because of the wealth they gained from the stripped-down Church, and the commoners because they deferred to the authorities and imposition of fines for not toeing the line and attending the new Anglican Church, as it became known. There were, too, objections from both Catholics and more radical Protestants such as the several Puritan groups who would go their own way and establish their own Churches which adhered more closely to the thoughts expounded by such reformers as John Calvin (1509-1564 CE).

1.10 QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by a the Renaissance?
2. In what ways did Europe experience a the Renaissance in the 1300s? Provide an example.
3. What are the three main reasons that the Renaissance began in Italy?
4. Why did the Medici family have so much influences during the Renaissance? What is a patron?
5. What is Humanism? How was it reflected in art?

6. What is perspective? How was it used in art?
7. Who were the main artists of the Renaissance? Identify and describe one contribution each of the 3 artists made.
8. Who were the main writers of the Renaissance? Identify and describe the literary works of Renaissance writers of your choice.
9. Write a note on meaning and significance of the Reformation.
10. What is the impact of the Reformation in England?
11. Does the corruption of the Catholic Church justify the actions of Protestant militants?

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UNIT-2

THE UNIVERSITY WITS

Structure

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After completing this unit, the students will be able to:

1. Understand the condition of the theatre in the 16th Century England.
2. Describe the role of the University Wits and their contribution to drama.
3. Deal with the major movements related to the drama and the dramatists through the study of selected texts.
4. Know the importance of the drama as a literary genre.
5. Know the literary tendencies of the period.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The term "University Wits", coined by George Saintsbury (a 19th Century journalist and author), refers to a wise band of professed men of letters who were the "rising sap" of dramatic creativity in the 1580s. This group of late 16th Century English playwrights and pamphleteers who were educated at the universities (Oxford or Cambridge) became popular secular writers. Prominent members of this group were Christopher Marlowe, Robert Greene, and Thomas Nashe from Cambridge, and John Lyly, Thomas Lodge, and George Peele from Oxford. Thomas Kyd is also sometimes included in the group, though he is not believed to have studied at university.

In this way the University Wits were a group of well-educated scholars-cum-men of letters who wrote in the closing years of the Sixteenth Century (They were called University Wits because they had training at one or other of the two Universities-Oxford and Cambridge. The only exception, and that a doubtful one, was Thomas Kyd. All of them were actively associated with the theatre and the plays written by them mark a pronounced stage of development over the drama which existed before them. With their dramatic work they paved the way for the great Shakespeare who was indebted to them in numerous ways.

In the history of the growth of English drama, particularly English tragedy, Seneca, the Latin dramatist who wrote in the first Century AD, exercised enormous influence. His influence was felt in Cambridge between 1550 and 1560, and his appeal was so great that his ten tragedies were translated into English by 1581. When the universities were raging with Senecan blaze, Marlowe, Peele and Greene studied at the universities. These young men, and some of their followers, who knew each other were responsible for the emergence of the Elizabethan School of Drama, and their plays had several features in common. These plays chose heroic themes like the lives of Mohammed and Tamburlaine, and these themes were treated heroically – with splendid descriptions, elaborate speeches, violent incidents and emotions. The style of the plays was marked by strong and sonorous lines, grand epithets, and powerful declamation. For obvious reasons, blank verse was the medium so that the high emotions could be sustainably expressed. Seneca being the guiding star, the dramatists opted to write tragedies and neglected to write comedies, considered a lower form of dramatic art. Naturally, real humour was lacking, and even if present somewhere it was coarse and boorish. Comedy had a day when Lyly appeared in the field, and his Campaspe (1584), Endymion (1592) and The Woman in the Moone are forerunners of Shakespeare's romantic comedies like The Twelfth Night or As You Like It.

2.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE UNIVERSITY WITS

Edward Albert in his History of English Literature (1979) argues that plays of the University Wits had several features in common:

(a) There was a fondness for heroic themes, such as the lives of great figures like Mohammed and Tamburlaine.

(b) Heroic themes needed heroic treatment: gratefulness and variety; splendid descriptions, long swelling speeches, the handling of violent incidents and emotions. These excellent qualities, excellent when held in restraint, only too often led to loudness and disorder.

(c) The style was also 'heroic'. The chief aim was to achieve strong and sounding lines, magnificent epithets, and powerful declamation. This again led to abuse and to mere bombast, mouthing, and in the worst cases to nonsense. In the best examples, such as in Marlowe, the result is quite impressive. In this connection it is to be noted that the best medium for such expression was blank verse, which was sufficiently elastic to bear the strong pressure of these expansive methods.

(d) The themes were usually tragic in nature, for the dramatists were as a rule too much in earnest to give heed to what was considered to be the lower species of comedy. The general lack of real humour in the early drama is one of its most prominent features. Humour, when it is brought in at all, is coarse and immature. Almost the only representative of the writers of real comedies is Lyly.

2.3 MAJOR WRITERS OF THE UNIVERSITY WITS

The University Wits is a group of seven scholars who belong to particular university such as Oxford or Cambridge except Thomas Kyd. They are as following:

2.3.1 John Lyly (1554-1606)

He was more famous as a writer of prose than a dramatist proper. The plays of Lyly were written after the publication of "Euphues", "the Anatomy of Wit" (1579) and were acted by 'the children of Paul's before her majesty.' His best-known dramas include "Alexander" and "Campaspe", played on New Year's Eve in 1581; "Sapho" and "Phao" (1584); "Endymion" (1591) written around the friendship between the Queen and the Earl of Leicester, and "Midas" (1592). He also wrote two other plays – "The Woman in the Moon" and "Love's Metamorphosis." Lyly's plays might lack stage effectiveness, but they display the dramatist's superior culture and a fine sense of style. His plays have more kinship with masques than the drama, and the delightful songs that are interpolated in the plays enhance their charm by a great measure. His dialogues are really admirable at times, happy in clear-cut phrases and allusiveness. After all said and done, the fame of Lyly rests on his prose work Euphues and the play, Endymion.

2.3.2 George Peele (1558-98)

George Peele was born in London, educated at Christ's Hospital and Oxford, and became a literary hack and freelance in London. His plays include *The Arraignment of Paris* (1584), a kind of romantic comedy; *The Famous Chronicle of King Edward the First* (1593), a rambling chronicle-play; *The Old Wives' Tale* (1591-94), a clever satire on the popular drama of the day; and *The Love of King David and Fair Bethsabe* (1599).

2.3.3 Robert Greene (1558-92)

Robert Greene wrote much and recklessly, but his plays are of sufficient merit to find a place in the development of the drama. He was born in Norwich, educated at Cambridge (1575) and Oxford (1588), and then took to literary life in London. If all accounts, including his own, are true, his career in London must have taken place in a sink of debauchery. He is said to have died, after an orgy in a London Ale-House, "of a surfeit of pickle herring and Rhenish wine." Here we can only refer to his thirty-five prose tracts, probably the best of his literary work, for they reveal his intense though erratic energy, quick, malicious wit, and powerful imagination. His plays number four: *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* (1587), an imitation of Marlowe's Tamburlaine; *Frier Bacon and Frier Bongay* (1589), easily his best, and containing some fine representations of Elizabethan life; *Orlando Furioso* (1591), adapted from an English translation of "Ariosto"; and "The Scottish Historie of James the Fourth" (acted in 1592), not a 'historical' play, but founded on an imaginary incident in the life of the King. Greene is weak in creating characters, and his style is not of outstanding merit, but his humour is somewhat genial in his plays and his methods less austere than those of the other tragedians.

2.3.4 Thomas Nash (1567-1601)

Thomas Nash was born at Lowestoft, educated at Cambridge, and then (1586) went to London to make his living by literature. He was a born journalist, but in those days, the only scope for his talents lay in pamphleteering. He took an active part in the political and personal questions of the day, and his truculent methods actually landed him in jail (1600). He finished Marlowe's "Dido," but his only surviving play is *Summer's Last Will and Testament* (1592), a satirical masque. His *The Unfortunate Traveller, or the Life of Jacke Wilton* **(**1594), a prose tale, is important in the development of the novel.

2.3.5 Thomas Lodge (1558-1625)

Thomas Lodge was the son of a Lord Mayor of London, was educated in London and at Oxford, and studied Law. He deserted his legal studies, took on a literary career, and is said to have been an actor at one time. His dramatic work is small in quantity. He probably collaborated with Shakespeare in *Henry VI* and other dramatists, including Greene. The only surviving play entirely his own is *The Wounds of Civil War* (1594), a kind of chronicle-play. His pamphleteering was voluminous and energetic. His prose romances constitute his greatest claim to fame. Though his prose is elaborate in the euphuistic style of Lyly, and the tales are often tedious, they contain exquisite lyrics. The most famous of his romances is *Rosalynde: Euphues Golden Legacy* (1590), which Shakespeare followed very closely in the plot of *As You Like It*.

2.3.6 Thomas Kyd (1558-94)

Thomas Kyd is one of the most important of the University Wits. Very little is known of his life. He was born in London, educated probably at Merchant Taylors' School, adopted a literary career, and became secretary to a nobleman. He became acquainted with Marlowe, and that brilliant but sinister spirit enticed him into composing "lewd libels" and "blasphemies." Marlowe's sudden death saved him from punishment for such offences, but Kyd was imprisoned and tortured. Though he was afterwards released, Kyd soon died under the weight of "bitter times and privy broken passions." Much of this dramatist's work has been lost. *The Spanish Tragedie* (about 1585) is the most important of the surviving plays. It's horrific plot, involving murder, frenzy, and sudden death, gave the play great and lasting popularity.

There is a largeness of tragic conception about the play that resembles the work of Marlowe, and there are touches of style that dimly foreshadow the great tragic lines of Shakespeare. The only other surviving play known to be Kyd's is *Cornelia* **(**1593), a translation from the French Senecan *Garnier*. Still, his hand has been sought in many plays, including *Soliman and Perseda* (1588), the First Part of *Jeronimo* (1592), an attempt to write after the success of *The Spanish Tragedie*, an introductory play to it, and Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*.

2.3.7 Christopher Marlowe (1564-93)

Christopher Marlowe was the greatest of the Pre-Shakespearian dramatists. He was born at Canterbury and educated there at Cambridge. He adopted literature as a profession and became attached to the Lord Admiral's players. His combination of an inquiring mind and dissolute life led him to be charged with atheism and immorality. Only his sudden death in a tavern brawl enabled him to avoid arrest.

Marlowe's plays, all tragedies, were written within five years (1587-92). He had no bent for comedy, and the comic parts found in some of his plays are always inferior and maybe by other writers. As a dramatist, Marlowe had serious limitations, though tracing a growing sense of the theatre through his plays is possible. Only in *Edward II* does he show any sense of plot construction, while his characterization is of the simplest and lacks the warm humanity of Shakespeare's. All the plays, except *Edward II*, revolve around one figure drawn in bold outlines.

This character shows no complexity or subtlety of development and is the embodiment of a single idea. Indeed, to appreciate Marlowe properly, we must put aside Conventional ideas of the drama and view his plays as the representation of a poetic vision, the typically Renaissance quest for power. In *Tamburlaine the Great*, the shepherd seeks the "sweet fruition of an earthly crown," The Jew of Malta Barabbas seeks "infinite riches in a little room," while the quest of *Doctor Faustus* is for more than human knowledge. Each play is the driving force behind this vision, giving it an artistic and poetic unity. It is, indeed, as a poet that Marlowe excels. Though not

the first to use blank verse in English drama, he was the first to exploit its possibilities and make them supreme.

His verse is notable for its burning energy, splendor of diction, sensuous richness, variety of pace, and responsiveness to the demands of varying emotions. Full of bold primary colours, his poetry is crammed with imagery from the classics, astronomy, and geography, imagery barbaric in its wealth and splendor. Its resonance and power led Ben Jonson to coin the phrase "Marlowe's mighty line," but it might has often obscured its technical precision and admirable lucidity and finish. At times Marlowe degenerates into bombast, and there is little attempt before Edward II to suit the speech to the speaker. Still, his blank verse is unequalled by his contemporaries, except for Shakespeare.

2.4 IMPACT OF THE UNIVERSITY WITS-JOURNEY OF ENGLISH DRAMA

The constellation of University Wits made the Elizabethan drama more popular with Renaissance humanism and pride of patriotism. English_drama for the first time in their hands recognized its potentialities and exuberance. They wrote classical plays, courtly comedies, farces, chronicle plays, melodramas etc. They gave thrill, action, sensation, humour and music. Undeniably the University Wits paved the way for Shakespeare and other playwrights of the coming of ages.

2.5 LET'S SUM UP

Thus, each of the University Wits advanced the English Drama in his unique style. Without the University Wits' efforts, the tremendous Shakespearean Drama would not have been conceivable. However, their disparate abilities were yet to be unified into one man and one work. Shakespeare's task was to unite them, to fuse them, and also to enhance them. Thus, Shakespeare produced England's full-blooded national Drama, the Romantic Drama, which appealed to all tastes and segments of society. And he infused it with his distinct, powerful comedy, which had been conspicuously absent from even Marlowe's tragedies. Shakespeare's uniqueness and magnificence are embodied in this synthesis.

2.6 QUESTIONS

1. What do you know about the pre-Shakespearean dramatists?
2. What are the main characteristics of the University Wits?
3. Write a note on John Lyly.
4. Write an Essay on the University Wits.
5. Discuss the contribution of Christopher Marlowe in English drama.
6. What is the theme of the University Wits' works?

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UNIT-3

THE METAPHYSICAL POETRY

Structure

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to:

- gain knowledge about the various Metaphysical Poets
- critically analyze the significant poems of the defferent poets.
- Deal with the question, "What is Poetry?" and the various elements of Poetry.
- Describe the techniques of Poetry, to describe vocabulary of literary terms such as poetic diction, imagery etc.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we will discuss the term metaphysical poetry, major metaphysical poets and its chief characteristics. Metaphysical poetry refers to a poetic tradition in 17th Century England, where a group of poets started writing unconventional poems with a unique blend of the head and the heart, i.e. emotion and intellect. Metaphysical poetry is concerned with the whole experience of man. It is full of learning, seriousness and intelligence. The tradition of metaphysical poetry is similar with the tradition of Elizabethan love poetry.

3.2 MEANING AND DEFINITIONS OF THE METAPHYSICAL POETRY

About the beginning of the 17th Century, writes Dr. Johnson, 'there appeared a race of poets that may be termed the metaphysical poets'. Dr. Johnson seems to have borrowed the term 'metaphysical' from Dryden who said that he 'affects the metaphysics'. Johnson's phrase 'may be termed' indicates that he used the term rather loosely, says Helen Gardner.

Metaphysical poetry eludes all attempts at definition, and the critics have restrained themselves by pointing out certain special features of this class of poetry. The term 'metaphysics' means 'beyond matter' (Meta means beyond and Physics means matter). But metaphysical poetry as a principle does not deal with spirituality; it is so called because of its certain characteristics.

The metaphysical poets 'were men of learning, and to show their learning was their whole endeavor'. They neither copied nature nor life, neither painted the forms of matter nor represented the operations of intellect. Their thoughts are often new but seldom natural. The most heterogeneous ideas are yoked together by violence; nature and art are ransacked for illustrations, comparisons and allusions; their learning instructs, and their subtlety surprises'. These startling comparisons between things and objects are more unlike than like, called conceits. Another trait of metaphysical poetry is concentration, and another one is argumentation. The metaphysical poets write both on religious and secular themes, but their amatory poems do not deal with Platonic love. While the love poems betray deep emotion and passion, they are remarkably tinged with sensuousness. Use of hyperboles alongside far-fetched images is another feature of metaphysical poetry, and while lyrical grace is ever present, they combine 'levity with seriousness'. Key features include intricate conceits, paradoxical language, and focus on intellectual and spiritual themes.

3.3 MAJOR METAPHYSICAL POETS

After knowing about the term metaphysical poetry, you might be eager to know the poets of the metaphysical school of poetry were and what made them write so. As we have read earlier John Donne was the father of this school of poetry. The metaphysical school included some other name like George Herbert, Henry Vaughan, Richard Crashaw, Robert Herrick, Thomas Carew, Abraham Cowley and Andrew Marvell. While all of them were directly or indirectly influenced by Donne, they differ in many respects from the pioneer and were not definitely talented as he was. He was known for his passionate and intellectual lone poems, as well as his religious verse.

3.3.1 John Donne

John Donne (1571 or 1572 – 31 March 1631) was an English poet, scholar, soldier and secretary born into a recusant family, who later became a cleric in the Church of England. The founder of this school of poets was John Donne who broke away from the traditional easy, fluent style, stock imagery, and pastoral conventions of the day. He aimed at reality of thought and vividness of expressions, and his poetry is graceful, vigorous, and despite faults in rhythm, often strangely harmonious.

In 1601 came out *Of the Progress of the Soule*, one of the satires written in the couplet form that later imitated by Dryden and then by Pope. The satires express Donne's dissatisfaction with the

world around him and point to his cynical nature and keenly critical mind. His Love poems, the Songs and Sonnets, were written in the same period and are intense and subtle analyses of all the moods of a lover expressed in vivid and startling language which is colloquial rather than conventional. The poems of Donne, essentially a psychological poet whose concern with feeling are all intensely personal and reveal a powerful and complex being. Besides Songs and Sonnets, other well-known poems of this group are *Aire and Angels*, A Nocturnal Upon St. Luce's Day, A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning and *The Extasie*. Donne wrote religious poetry after 1610. *Holy Sonnets*, nineteen in number and the lyrics such as *A Hymn to* GOD THE FATHER written after his wife's death in 1617 are also too intense and personal and reveal the struggle in his mind before he took orders in the Anglican Church. They also reveal his horror of death, his fear of the wrath of God and his yearning for God's love. Donne startles us by his unusual and striking imagery and his conceits. He compares the lovers to the two legs of a compass, his sick body to a map and his physicians to cosmographers, to name a few.

3.3.2 George Herbert

George Herbert (1593-1633) is the name that follows next to Donne. None of his poems were published during his life-time. The Temple which was published in 1633 shows his zeal for the Church of England and his concern with practical theology. He himself described the work as 'a picture of the many spiritual conflicts that have passed betwixt God and my soul, before I could subject mine to the will of Jesus, my Master ; in whose service I have now found perfect freedom.' The poems are peculiarly honest, intimate, sincere and modest. They are homely, quiet and colloquial and touched with a quaint humour. They are metaphysical in their use of unusual conceits (though Herbert does not cultivate the learned, scholastic imagery of Donne) and in the blend of thought and feeling. Herbert was a colorful artist, precise and simple in expression, fond of unusual metrical patterns as in Easter Wings, and a lover of harmony. His poetry is sensitive to the most delicate changes of feeling. All his verses are the expression of piety as a man and as a priest. His theory was that should dedicate all his gifts to God's service. "He is the saint of the metaphysical school," writes Emile Legouis.

3.3.3 Richard Crashaw

Richard Crashaw (1612-1649) was the son of a Puritan clergyman but he did not remain within the Anglican fold and became a Catholic when he was about 22 years old. He ended his life in Rome as secretary to Cardinal Palotta. While still at the university, he was an expert Latin poet. The first collection of his poems which was published after his death was Delights of the Muses. There is in this collection an imitative poem on the song of a nightingale, Music's Duel. His earliest poem Wishes to His Supposed Mistress is rhythmically unique and enumerates the gifts which he would like his beloved to possess. In 1646 he published Steps to the Temple which was a collection of poems written before his conversion. In this collection *Sospetto d' Herode* and The Weeper inspire admiration. While yet an Anglican, Crashaw conceived ardent veneration for Saint Teresa, and he returned to her as a Catholic in order to write his most magnificent hymn, *The Flamimg Heart, Upon the Book and Picture of the Seraphical Saint Teresa*. The flight of holy love which ends this poem is perhaps the most ardent product of English religious poetry. Crashaw's poems, all of them, have several faults. Occasionally absurd, he scattered conceits everywhere. While he was less intellectual than Herbert, and while his language was less simple and precise, he was more warmth, colour and harmony. "His lyric flights", says Emile Legouis, "have been equaled only by Shelley".

3.3.4 Henry Vaughan

Henry Vaughan, the mystical Welsh doctor began writing secular poetry which shows the influence of Ben Jonson upon him. But an acute illness turned his thought to spiritual things. He imitated George Herbert in *Silex Scintillans* which appeared in two parts in 1650 and 1655. He is perhaps the only 17th Century poet who was scorned in his early career but who was widely esteemed in his later life. Of Vaughan's poems, only a few have indubitable value, but "these are pure gold". His mysticism is more fluent and less argumentative, and his imagination is mellower. He prayed not in a church like Herbert but in the open air. His love for nature mingles with Christian meditativeness and adds a romantic and modern value to poetry.

Vaughan had a hermit's soul, lacked the art to construct even a few stanzas nor could he always conclude a poem. Although his versification is far less skilful than Herbert, his meditations on life and death draw attention. His *Retreat* which is an exquisite poem glorifies childhood and anticipates Wordsworth's Immortality Ode. Although Vaughan was looked down upon by his contemporaries, he had a follower named Thomas Trahne who was born about 1634 and emulated Vaughan's glorification of childhood.

3.3.5 Thomas Carew

Thomas Carew (1594 – 1639) wrote Poems which was published in 1640. They demonstrated his lyrical ability, and although they betray the influence of Donne and Jonson, they have a character of their own. The fancy is warmly coloured though it is marred by license and bad taste. His lines are marked by rich and beautiful fancy and golden felicity of diction which is rarely equaled is as follows:

"Ask me no more if east or west
The phoenix builds her spicy nest,
For unto you at she flies,
And in your fragrant bosom dies."

3.3.6 Abraham Cowley

Abraham Cowley (1618 – 1667), even more than Pope and Macaulay, is the great example of the infant prodigy. When he was ten, he wrote a long epical romance, Pyramus and Thisbe (who are two young lovers from Babylon whose tragic love story is popularized in Ovid's Metamorphoses) and two years later composed an even longer poem, *Constantia and Philetus*. He not only wrote poems but also plays and histories. *The Davideis,an unfinished,* four-book epic poem which was published in 1656 is his best known poem, written in heroic couplet. It is a rather dreary epic on King David. His other poetical works include *The Mistress* (1647), a collection of love poems and the Pindaric Odes which combine the classicism of the later generation with Elizabethan romanticism. In Cowley, the metaphysical strain is feeble. He was a learned man but his work suffered from a lack of deep feeling and his use of wit and conceits was artificial and lacked in artistry. Milton considers that Cowley was one of the three great English poets, the other two being Shakespeare and Spenser. But his renown dwindled with the passage of time. Interestingly Dr. Johnson began his *Lives of the English Poets* with Cowley whom he considered as heading the moderns. Cowley's other works include *Miscellanies* occasionally filled with verse. In this work, we find *On the Death of Mr. William Hervey*, a Cambridge friend and *On the Death of Mr. Crashaw*, which show him at his best as a man. His *Of Wit* defines wit in classical manner and *Against Hope* seeks to define hope. He also wrote verses on reason in which he defines piety, and after the Restoration, he addressed an *Ode to the Royal Society* which is an eloquent tribute to Bacon. Today, the pleasant prose of his Essays is more read than his verses.

3.3.7 Andrew Marvell

Andrew Marvell (1621-1678) was a Puritan songster. But he was not, however, a conventionally harsh and gloomy Puritan, the enemy of worldly artistic amusement. His verses are written in 30th year glow with human love and feeling for nature. On the whole religion has far less place in Marvell's verses than in those of other Puritans. Marvell loads his own feeling in the longest of his poems *Upon Appletone House* which shows his familiarity with the countryside and its trees and birds. His feeling for animals, his suffering when they suffer is voiced with infinite gracefulness in his semi-mythological poem, *The Nymph*, complaining for the death of her fawn.

He was the first to see the glory of gardens and orchards. Marvell's *Garden* foreshadows Keats by its sensuousness and Wordsworth by its optimistic and serene meditative mood. Still he prefers wild to cultivated nature, and he protests against grafting, budding and selection in the *Winter's Tale and in The Mowers Against Garden*. Sometimes Marvell turns to the pastoral but he gives it a new emphasis of truth and even of realism. The short idyll *Ametas and Thestylis Making Hay-ropes* is very original and graceful.

Love poems of Marvell are not many, but several like the graceful Gallery and the slightly ironical *Mowning, Daphnis* and *Chloe* hold us by their passion. The latter demonstrates woman's tricks, artifices and coquetry. His *To His Coy Mistress* is a marvelous love poem which runs easily and harmoniously and bears the marks of Donne's strength and passion minus his obscurity and bad taste. It is a masterpiece of metaphysical poetry based on the carpe diem theory. The strange, sensuous and passionate Marvell was also an ardent patriot, and his patriotism is reflected in Horatian ode upon *Cromwell's Return from Ireland*, *First Anniversary of the Government under His Highness, the Lord Protector and Poem upon the Death of His Late Highness, the Lord Protector*. Marvell paid too little regard to versification. His lyrical works are written in almost entirely eight-syllable couplets, a pleasant metre. He ought to have a more exacting standard of art, and more whole-hearted devotion to poetry, greater mastery of words and rhyme to rank among the greatest.

3.4 CHARACTERISTICS THE OF METAPHYSICAL POETRY

3.4.1 The Metaphysical Conceit

The Conceit is the main feature of metaphysical poetry. The conceit is an elaborate poetic image or far- fetched comparison of very dissimilar things, a witty or ingenious way. The main aim of conceit is to surprise and delight the readers by a witty statement. The metaphysical poets used similes, metaphors by drawing far-fetched and remote images in their poetry. Most of Donne's poetry has the wit and the conceit. For example: 'lovers as hermit' in "The Canonization" and extolling the flea as 'marriage bed' and 'marriage temple' in the poem "The Flea".

3.4.2 Unification of Sensibility

T.S. Eliot said that the metaphysical poets had the 'unification of sensibility'. According to Eliot the metaphysical poets had the unique quality of combining the thought and feeling or the intellect and emotion. The unification of sensibility involves the poet's ability to fuse these intellectual aspects with deep emotions, providing readers with a more comprehensive and resonant. Unlike the Elizabethan poets who often kept these elements separate, metaphysical poets merged complex intellectual ideas with deep emotions, creating a harmonious synthesis.

3.4.3 Learnedness

Learnedness is another important feature of the Metaphysical poetry. It refers to the intellectual depth and erudition displayed by poets. In the metaphysical poetry learnedness served as a means to explore profound ideas and delve into complex aspects of human experience. For instance, Donne's "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" employs compass imagery to articulate a sophisticated argument about spiritual connection and love.

3.4.4 Theme of Love

Love is one of the salient features of metaphysical poetry. Love in metaphysical poetry often diverges from conventional romantic expressions, featuring unconventional metaphors, paradoxes, and intellectual depth. The metaphysical poets like Marvell, Donne, Herbert and Cowley are the great love poets. They often intertwine love with religious and philosophical themes, exploring the tension between the earthly and divine. For example, John Donne's "The Good-Morrow" explores a deep, soulful connection between lovers, intertwining physical and metaphysical aspects to convey a profound sense of unity and completeness.

3.4.5 Obscurity

The metaphysical poets are also known for their use of obscure language. The main reason behind this obscurity lies in the fact that poets make use their erudition in their poetry. These poets employed obscure language to provoke contemplation, inviting readers to delve deeper into the profound layers of meaning in their verses. The deliberate use of ambiguity and enigmatic expressions contributes to the unique and thought provoking nature of metaphysical poetry. For example, John Donne's "The Good Morrow" refers to his soul in this way:

And now good morrow to our waking soules,

Which watch not one another out of feare;

For love, all love of other sights controules,

And makes one little roome, an every where

3.5 LET'S SUM UP

In this way Metaphysical poetry is a group of poems that share common characteristics: they are all highly intellectualized, use rather strange imagery, use frequent paradox and contain extremely complicated thought. Literary critic and poet Samuel Johnson first coined the term 'metaphysical poetry' in his book Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets (1179-1781). In the book, Johnson wrote about a group of 17th- Century British poets that included John Donne, George Herbert, Richard Crashaw, Andrew Marvell and Henry Vaughan. He noted how the poets shared many common characteristics, especially ones of wit and elaborate style.

3.6 QUESTIONS

1. What do you understand by the term metaphysical poetry?
2. Who was the founder of the Metaphysical School of Poetry?
3. Why poets of the 17th Century were called as Metaphysical poets?
4. Who used the term Metaphysical Poets?
5. Write a note on the contribution of John Donne?
6. Discuss the theme in Andrew Marvell's poetry?

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UNIT-4

NEOCLASSICISM

Structure

4.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- Understand the basic concepts of neoclassical criticism
- Identify the major exponents of neoclassical criticism
- Situate and contextualise neoclassical criticism in the history of English literature

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The 18th Century is also known as the Neo Classical Age because its writers looked back to the ideals and art forms of classical times. They emphasized even more than their Renaissance predecessors on the classical ideals of order and rational control. The 18th Century writers replaced Renaissance emphasis on the imagination, on invention, experimentation and on mysticism. Their emphasis was on order and reason, on restraint, on common sense and on religious, political, economic and philosophical conservatism. The 18th Century writers maintained that man himself was the most appropriate subject of art. They saw art itself an essentially pragmatic as valuable. They saw art was somehow useful and was properly intellectual rather than emotional. Sometimes the latter half of the 18th Century, the period between 1750 and 1798 is taken as a different period called the Age of Sensibility. This period focused on instinct, feeling and imagination.

4.2 LITERATURE OF THE AUGUSTAN AGE

Alexander Pope and Samuel Johnson are seen as the most representative writers of this period. Dryden can be seen as a link between Restoration and Augustan Age. Dryden wrote comedies in a Restoration vein, but also wrote works in a neoclassical spirit. Matthew Arnold called 18th Century as 'the age of prose and reason' the influence of enlightenment, wit and intellectual conceits set the tone of much Augustan Age. Dryden, Pope, Swift, Addison and other writers demonstrated qualities of order, clarity and stylistic decorum. Their works were concerned with facts and reason and less concern was shown to emotion and imagination.

4.3 LITERARY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AUGUSTAN AGE

This was an age of new prose forms such as periodicals, criminal biographies, travelogues, political allegories and romantic tales. The predominance of satire is an important literary characteristic of this age. Augustan age saw rise of the novel as a genre [literary form]. Novel became the most important literary expression of the bourgeoisie [rich middle class] and middle class. Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, Smollett were the main exponents of this form. The Heroic couplet [two lines of rhymed iambic pentameter] was the most important verse form of poetry of the age. Sentimental comedy was a new dramatic form that became popular during this age. Later it was burlesqued (mocked) by writers such as Goldsmith.

4.4 LITERARY TRENDS OF THE AGE

Periodical essay, Literature of sensibility and Graveyard poetry were new literary trends of the age.

4.4.1 Periodical Essay

Periodical essay was the new literary form that emerged during the early part of the 18th Century. It was a non-fictional prose that was published in magazines, newspapers or journals at regular intervals. These essays mirrored the Augustan Age in England. The periodical essay dealt with matters that were contemporary, but not immediate with matters and morals, with tendencies of the time rather than actual events. The rise of this form began with John Dunton' *Athenian Gazette* on 17th March 1691. The term 'Periodical essay' was first used by George Colman The Elder and Bonnel Thornton in their magazine the Connoisseur (1754-56) The Tatler (1709-1711), The Spectator (1711-12), The Rambler (1750-51) were the most successful and influential single essay periodicals of the 18th Century. Richard Steele, Joseph Addison, Thomas Tickell, Alexander Pope, Ambrose Philips were some great contributors to this form. Important Periodicals of the Age: Name of the Year Founder Periodical *The Tatler* [1709-1711] Richard Steele Published three times a week [Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday] *The Spectator* [1711-12] Joseph Addison and Richard Steele *The Guardian* 12 March 1713 to 01 October 1713 Richard Steele Daily publication *The Rambler* [1750-52] Samuel Johnson Tuesdays Saturdays *The Idler* [1758-60] and Samuel Johnson , Weekly *Literature of Sensibility*: Literature of Sensibility refers to a particular type of literature written during the 18th Century, which focused on feelings of sympathy and sensibility. Sensibility here meant an ability to emotionally respond to beauty and sublimity. It was a revolt against philosophy of Hobbes and other 17th Century empirical philosophers. These philosophers viewed human beings as selfish and greedy. Proponents of literature of sensibility believed that 1. Feelings were far more reliable guides to morality and truth than abstract principles 2. A view human beings as essentially benevolent. A key text 'The Theory of Moral Sentiments' [1759] by Adam Smith contributed towards this movement towards sensibility. Important Novels of sensibility: 1. *Julie* by Jean-Jacques Rousseau 2. *Pamela* [1740] and *Clarissa Harlowe* [1748] by Samuel Richardson 3. *A Sentimental Journey* [1768] and *Tristram Shandy* [1767] by Laurence Sterne 4. *Man of Feeling* [1771] by Henry MacKenzie Plays of sensibility: 1. *The Conscious Lovers* by Richard Steele 2. *The West Indian* by Richard Cumberland Poems of sensibility: 1. *Sensibility* [1782] by Hannah More 2. *Elegiac Sonnets* [1784] by Charlotte Smith.

4.4.2 Graveyard Poetry

Graveyard School of Poets refers to a group of 18th Century poets, whose works dealt with the themes of death, sorrow and mortality. Often set in a graveyard, the poems mused on the vicissitudes [different opinions] of life, the solitude of death and the anguish of bereavement. Graveyard school incorporated melancholy and expanded the range of emotional responses to death to include grief, tenderness, tearfulness, nostalgia and other states of mind.

Famous Poems/Poets of Graveyard:

1. *Night Piece on Death* [1721] by Thomas Parnell
2. *The Grave* [1743] by Robert Blair
3. *Night Thoughts* [1742-45] by Edward Young
4. *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* [1751] by Thomas Gray

4.5 MAJOR POETS OF THE AUGUSTAN AGE

The Augustan Age in English literature refers to the first half of the 18th Century (approximately 1700–1750), a period marked by a return to classical ideals of order, decorum, and rationalism. Named after Emperor Augustus of Rome, under whose rule Roman literature flourished, the term suggests a similarly golden era in English letters. It was a time of political

stability under Queen Anne, George I, and George II, which encouraged literary development. Writers during this time sought to imitate the clarity and restraint of classical antiquity, often emphasizing satire, wit, and social commentary**.**

4.5.1 Alexander Pope (1688–1744)

Alexander Pope is the quintessential Augustan poet, known for his mastery of the heroic couplet and his sharp wit. His poetry reflects the neoclassical ideals of balance, order, and reason and he was particularly skilled at using satire to critique society, politics and literary trends of his time. His major works include *The Rape of the Lock*, a mock-epic that humorously exposes the trivialities and vanity of the 18th- Century aristocratic society. Another key works *An Essay on Man,* a philosophical poem explores humanity's place in the universe and emphasizes rational understanding and acceptance of divine order. His *The Dunciad* critiques cultural decay and intellectual decline. Pope's style is marked by balance, clarity, precision, elegance, and biting irony, making him a powerful voice of reason and reform.

4.5.2 Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709–1784)

Dr. Samuel Johnson, though primarily remembered for his famous work *A Dictionary of the English Language***,** was also a significant poet whose contributions to the 18th Century English literature are noteworthy**.** His poetry is characterized by moral seriousness, philosophical depth, and classical influence. One of his notable poems, The Vanity of Human Wishes is a powerful satirical piece that explores human ambition, the futility of worldly pursuits, and the unpredictability of fate. His writing often delves into the complexities of human life, emphasizing themes such as morality, virtue and limits of human reason. His style is marked by formal diction, balanced syntax and an elevated tone, aligning with neoclassical ideals while also introducing a reflective and philosophical seriousness.

4.5.3 Thomas Gray (1716–1771)

Thomas Gray is best known for his elegiac and meditative poetry. His most famous work Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard is a poignant reflection on morality, the anonymity of the rural poor, and the inevitability of death. Gray's poetry marks a transition from Augustan rationalism to early Romanticism. His verse displays meditative introspection and emotional depth, while still retaining formal precision.

4.5.4 William Collins (1721–1759)

Collins, like Gray, is associated with the shift towards Romanticism. His Odes, especially *Ode to Evening* and *Ode on the Poetical Character*, exhibit lyrical beauty, a love for nature, and imaginative expression. He emphasized poetic imagination and the sublime, moving away from rigid rationalism. His use of vivid imagery and musical language reflects a love for the natural world and an individualistic approach to poetic creation.

4.5.5 Oliver Goldsmith (1730–1774)

Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village* laments the loss of rural life and social inequality, reflecting both classical form and growing social consciousness. His poetry is graceful and nostalgic.

4.5.6 William Cowper (1731–1800)

Cowper's verse combines personal emotion with moral concern. Works like The Task blend nature, domesticity, and spiritual reflection. He was a forerunner of Romantic poetry.

4.5.7 George Crabbe (1754–1832)

Crabbe's The Village counters idealized portrayals of rural life with grim realism. His narrative poetry, rooted in social observation, bridges Augustan satire and Victorian naturalism.

4.5.8 Robert Burns (1759–1796)

A Scottish poet writing in Scots dialect, Burns is best known for songs like Auld Lang Syne and poems like To a Mouse. While not classically Augustan in style, his work reflects Enlightenment values of liberty and human dignity.

4.5.9 William Blake (1757–1827)

Blake stands apart as a visionary poet and artist. Though chronologically close to the Augustans, his Songs of Innocence and Experience explore innocence, corruption, and divine imagination, heralding Romanticism.

4.6 MAJOR NOVELISTS OF THE AUGUSTAN AGE

4.6.1 Jonathan Swift (1667–1745)

Swift's Gulliver's Travels is a masterful satire on politics, science, and human nature. He used prose fiction to critique society with biting irony and allegory. He's also known for A Modest Proposal, a savage political satire.

4.6.2 Daniel Defoe (1660–1731)

Often credited with writing the first English novel, Defoe's Robinson Crusoe and Moll Flanders blend realism with adventure. His characters reflect individualism, economic self-reliance, and moral complexity.

4.6.3 Samuel Richardson (1689–1761)

Richardson pioneered the epistolary novel with Pamela and Clarissa, focusing on domestic virtue, psychological depth, and moral trials. His works emphasize the inner lives of characters, particularly women.

4.6.4 Laurence Sterne (1713–1768)

Sterne's The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy broke with narrative convention through digressions, metafiction, and humor. He anticipated many modernist techniques.

4.6.5 Henry Fielding (1707–1754)

Fielding's Tom Jones and Joseph Andrews combine satire with broad social commentary. His novels are expansive, comic, and deeply humane, drawing on classical models and contemporary life.

4.6.6 Tobias Smollett (1721–1771)

Smollett's novels, such as Roderick Random, depict the picaresque adventures of roguish characters. His work is marked by realism, humor, and insight into human follies.

4.7 MAJOR PROSE WRITERS OF THE AUGUSTAN AGE

4.7.1 Joseph Addison (1672–1 719)

With Richard Steele, Addison co-founded The Spectator, a periodical promoting polite conversation, morality, and literary taste. His essays blend elegance, wit, and educational intent.

4.7.2 Richard Steele (1672–1729)

Steele's prose is more emotional and personable than Addison's. Through The Tatler and The Spectator, he helped shape middle-class literary culture and moral discourse.

4.7.3 John Arbuthnot (1667–1735)

A physician and satirist, Arbuthnot contributed to the Scriblerus Club alongside Pope and Swift. His satire The History of John Bull mocked political disputes, and he was a key figure in Tory literary culture.

4.8 SOCIAL- POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF NEO- CLASSICAL AGE

The neoclassic period of English literature is usually taken to be the hundred odd years (1660-1780) that is from the maturity of John Dryden to the death of Dr. Samuel Johnson (1784). This literary period is further divided in three parts: the Restoration period (1660- 1700), the Augustan period (1700-1750), and the Age of Johnson (1750-1798). This was also the era of Enlightenment which put emphasis on the importance of logic and reason. In literary theory and practice most writers of this period were traditionalist and they had great respect for the Greek and Roman authors, especially the Romans, who, as per their belief, had established and perfected the principal literary genres for all time. It was, in a sense, a resurgence of classical taste and sensibility. Literature was regarded as an art, in which excellence could be attained only by prolonged study. They thought the rules of this art could best be learnt from close study of the classical authors and by careful imitation of their works. They thought that reason and judgment were the most admirable faculties (18th Century was the Age of Reason) and that decorum was essential. In prose, as in verse, the most desirable qualities were order, accuracy, harmony, balance, proportion and restraint. It follows that the Neo-classical writers aimed at correctness. And the result was the heroic couplet. Man in society, man in his social environment and above all the general and representative characteristics of mankind were the preoccupations of the poets. Dr. Johnson summarized it all in The Vanity of Human Wishes. They frequently use satire as a means of corrective. It was a means of controlling folly, stupidity and corruption. They aimed to maintain good moral orders and literary discipline. As Pope wrote in his Essay on Man, "Order is Heaven's first law". They have some sort of moral obligation to instruct as well as to please.

Some of the most famous writers of this age are John Dryden (1631-1700), Alexander Pope (1688-1744), Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), Daniel Defoe (1660-1731), and Samuel Johnson (1709-1784). Comedy of Manners, Satires and Mock-epic were some of the most popular genres of this period. Neoclassicism was a child of the Age of Reason (the Enlightenment), when philosophers believed that we would be able to control our destinies by learning from and following the laws of nature (the United States was founded on Enlightenment Philosophy). Scientific inquiry attracted more attention. Therefore, Neoclassicism continued the connection to the classical tradition because it signified moderation and rational thinking but in a new and more politically-charged spirit ("neo" means "new," or in the case of art, an existing style reiterated with a new twist.)

Neoclassicism is characterised by clarity of form, sober colors, shallow space, strong horizontal and verticals that render that subject matter timeless (instead of temporal as in the dynamic Baroque works), and classical subject matter (or classicizing contemporary subject matter).

Neo-Classicism refers to a broad tendency in literature and art enduring from the early seventeenth Century until around 1750. While the nature of this tendency inevitably varied across different cultures, it was usually marked by a number of common concerns and characteristics. Most fundamentally, neo-Classicism comprised a return to the classical models, literary styles and

values of ancient Greek and Roman authors. In this, the neo-Classicists were to some extent heirs of the Renaissance humanists. But many of them reacted sharply against what they perceived to be the stylistic excess, superfluous ornamentation, and linguistic over sophistication of some Renaissance writers; they also rejected the lavishness of the Gothic and Baroque styles.

Many major Mediaeval and Renaissance writers, including Dante, Ariosto, More, Spenser and Milton had peopled their writings with fantastic and mythical beings. Authors such as Giraldi had attempted to justify the genre of the romance and the use of the "marvellous" and unreal elements. Sidney and others had even proposed, in an idealizing Neo-Platonist strain, that the poet's task was to create an ideal world, superior to the world of nature. The neo-Classicists, reacting against this idealistic tendency in Renaissance poetics, might be thought of as heirs to the other major tendency in Renaissance poetics, which was Aristotelian. This latter impetus had been expressed in the work of Minturno, Scaliger and Castelvetro who all wrote commentaries on Aristotle's Poetics and stressed the Aristotelian notion of probability, as well as the "unities" of action, time and place.

However, whereas many Renaissance poets had labored toward an individualism of outlook, even as they appropriated elements of the classical canon, the neo-Classicists in general were less ambiguous in their emphasis upon the classical values of objectivity, impersonality, rationality, decorum, balance, harmony, proportion and moderation. Whereas many Renaissance poets were beginning to understand profoundly the importance of invention and creativity, the neo-Classical writers reaffirmed literary composition as a rational and rule-bound process, requiring a great deal of craft, labour and study. Where Renaissance theorists and poets were advocating new and mixed genres, the neo-Classicists tended to insist on the separation of poetry and prose, the purity of each genre and the hierarchy of genres (though, unlike Aristotle, they generally placed the epic above tragedy). The typical verse forms of the neo-Classical poets were the alexandrine in France and the heroic couplet in England. Much neo-Classical thought was marked by a recognition of human finitude, in contrast with the humanists' (and, later, the Romantics) assertion of almost limitless human potential.

Two of the concepts central to neo-Classical literary theory and practice were imitation and nature, which were intimately related. In one sense, the notion of imitation — of the external world, and primarily, of human action — was a reaffirmation of the ideals of objectivity and impersonality, as opposed to the increasingly sophisticated individualism and exploration of subjectivity found in Renaissance writers. But also integral to this notion was imitation of classical models, especially Homer and Vergil. In fact, these two aspects of imitation were often identified, as by Pope. The identification was based largely on the concept of nature. This complex concept had a number of senses. It referred to the harmonious and hierarchical order of the universe, including the various social and political hierarchies within the world. In this vast scheme of nature, everything had its proper and appointed place. The concept also referred to human nature: to what was central, timeless and universal in human experience. Hence, "nature" had a deep moral significance, comprehending the modes of action that were permissible and excluding certain actions as "unnatural" (a term often used by Shakespeare to describe the murderous and cunning behavior of characters such as Lady Macbeth). Clearly, the neo-Classical vision of nature was very different from the meanings later given to it by the Romantics; this vision inherited something of the mediaeval view of nature as a providential scheme but, as will emerge shortly, it was informed by more recent scientific views of nature rather than by Aristotelian physics. The Neo-Classical writers generally saw the ancients such as Homer and Vergil as having already discovered and expressed the fundamental laws of nature. Hence, the external world, including the world of human action, could best be expressed by modern writers if they followed the path of imitation already

paved by the ancients. Invention was of course allowed but only as a modification of past models, not in the form of a rupture.

Having said all of this, the neo-Classicists were by no means devoted to slavish imitation of the classics. La Bruyere indeed thought that the ancients had already expressed everything that was worth saying; and Pope, in one of his more insistent moments, equated following the rules of nature with the imitation of Homer. But Ben Jonson, Corneille, Dryden and many others were more flexible in their assimilation of classical values. Nearly all of them acknowledged the genius of Shakespeare, some the genius of Milton; Boileau recognized the contribution of an inexplicable element, the je ne sais quoi, in great art, and Pope acknowledged that geniuses could attain "a grace beyond the reach of art." Moreover, the neo-Classicists attempted to develop and refine Aristotle's account of the emotions evoked by tragedy in an audience, and an important part of their endeavor to imitate nature consisted in portraying the human passions. There raged at the beginning of the Eighteenth Century various debates over the relative merits of "ancients" and "moderns." The ancients were held to be the repository of good sense, natural laws, and the classical values of order, balance and moderation. Such arguments were found in Jonathan Swift's The Battle of the Books (1710) and in the writings of Boileau and Pope. Proponents of the "modern" laid stress on originality of form and content, flexibility of genre, and the license to engage in new modes of thought.

The connection of neo-Classicism to recent science and what would eventually emerge as some of the core values of the Enlightenment was highly ambivalent and even paradoxical. On the one hand, the neo-Classical concept of nature was informed by Newtonian physics, and the universe was acknowledged to be a vast machine, subject to fixed analyzable laws. On the other hand, the tenor of most neo-Classical thought was retrospective and conservative. On the surface, it might seem that the neo-Classical writers shared with Enlightenment thinkers a belief in the power of reason. The neo-Classicists certainly saw literature as subject to a system of rules, and literary composition as a rational process, subject to the faculty of judgment (Pope uses the word "critic" in its original Greek sense of "judge"). But, while it is true that some neo-Classical writers, especially in Germany, were influenced by Descartes and other rationalists, the "reason" to which the neo-Classical writers appeal is in general not the individualistic and progressive reason of the Enlightenment (though, as will be seen in a later chapter, Enlightenment reason could from other perspectives be seen as a coercive and oppressive force); rather, it is the "reason" of the classical philosophers, a universal human faculty that provides access to general truths and which is aware of its own limitations. Alexander Pope and others emphasized the finitude of human reason, cautioning against its arrogant and unrestricted employment. Reason announced itself in neo-Classical thought largely in Aristotelian and sometimes Horatian terms: an adherence to the requirements of probability and verisimilitude, as well as to the three unities, and the principle of decorum. But the verisimilitude or likeness to reality here sought after was different from Nineteenth Century realism that sought to depict the typical elements and the universal truths about any given situation; it did not operate via an accumulation of empirical detail or a random recording of so-called reality. It was reason in this Aristotelian sense that lay behind the insistence on qualities such as order, restraint, moderation and balance.

Interestingly, Michael Moriarty has argued that the Neo-Classical insistence on adherence to a body of rules embodies an ideological investment which must be understood in terms of broader developments in the literary market. A specifically literary criticism, he urges, began to emerge as a specialized and professional discipline in the Seventeenth Century, with literature being identified as an autonomous field of study and expertise. Seventeenth Century criticism addressed an expanded readership which it helped to create: this broader public ranged from the aristocracy of

the court and the salons to the middle strata of the bourgeoisie. The critical ideology of this public was orientated toward pleasure and to evaluation based on polite "taste." The rise of periodical presses during the second half of the Seventeenth Century "provided a new channel for discourse about literature addressed to a non-scholarly social elite." But there was a reciprocal interaction: the habits of literary consumption modified critical discourse; for example, despite the epic's high theoretical status, the demands and tastes of an increasing theatre-going public generated far more criticism about drama. Along with these developments, a class of literary men newly emerged from bourgeois backgrounds, the nouveaux doctes, specialized in a specifically literary training, and focused on language, rhetoric and poetics. This mastery enabled them to establish a new, more respectable identity for themselves as men of letters, whereby they could offer polite society the kind of pleasure befitting its dignity. They defined this pleasure in Horatian terms, as necessarily conjoined with instruction; it was a refined pleasure, issuing from a conformity to rules. It was these rules, impersonally and sacredly embodied in ancient authorities such as Aristotle and Horace, and modern authorities such as the Academie Francaise, that consecrated the work as a product of art and which legitimated "the poet's status as a purveyor of pleasure" to the dominant groups.

This general tendency of Neo-Classicism toward order, clarity and standardization was manifested also in attempts during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries to regulate the use of language and the meanings of words. In France, the Academic Franchise was established for this purpose in 1635, and writers such as Francois de Malherbe argued that meanings should be stabilized in the interests of linguistic clarity and communication. Samuel Johnson's Dictionary was published in 1755. The impetus behind these endeavors was reflected in John Locke's theory of language, and his insistence, following Descartes, that philosophy should proceed by defining its terms precisely, using "clear and distinct" ideas and avoiding figurative language. This ideal of clarity, of language as the outward sign of the operations of reason, permeated Neo-Classical poetry which was often discursive, argumentative and aimed to avoid obscurity. This movement toward clarity has been variously theorized as coinciding with the beginnings of bourgeois hegemony, as reacting against a proliferation of vocabulary and meanings during the Renaissance, and as marking a step further away from a Mediaeval allegorical way of thinking toward an attempted lateralization of language.

Ironically, Neo-Classicism helped prepare the way for its own demise. One avenue toward this self-transcendence of Neo-Classicism was through the concept of the sublime. The first Century treatise called On the Sublime, attributed to "Longinus," had viewed the sublime as a form of emotional transport beyond the rational faculty. Boileau's translation of this text in 1674 was followed by flourishing discussions of the topic in England and Germany, which were often accompanied, as we shall see in the chapter on Kant, by an extensive examination of the concept of beauty. In fact, in England, the contrast "between sublimity and correctness had socio-political resonance, since the former was associated with the English subject's liberty, the latter with both the English and the absolutist French Court" (CHLC, III, 552-553). Another legacy of the Neo-Classicists was an examination of the notion of "taste" in terms of consensus of qualified people. This notion of consensus prepared the way for an aesthetic orientated toward reader-response rather than mere adherence to an abstract body of rules**.**

4.9 IMPACT OF NEOCLASSICISM

It brought about a general revival in classical thought that mirrored what was going on in political and social arenas of the time, leading to the French Revolution. The primary Neoclassicist belief was that art should express the ideal virtues in life and could improve the viewer by imparting a moralizing message.

Neoclassicism in English literature refers to a movement which flourished between 1660 and 1798. The term refers to a style that is based on, but different from, the classic structures of the Roman and Greek writers of old.

4.10 LET'S SUM UP

In this way we can say that Neoclassicism in English literature refers to a movement which flourished between 1660 and 1798. The term refers to a style that is based on, but different from, the classic structures of the Roman and Greek writers of old. "Neo"' means "new," so the term literally means "the old classic".

4.11 QUESTIONS

- What was neoclassicism also called?
- What are the three main themes of neoclassicism?
- Write a note on the major poets of the neoclassical age.
- What are the major trends of Neoclassicism?
- Discuss the socio-political background of Neo-Classical literature.
- Who was the first neoclassical writer?

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UNIT-5

ELIZABETHAN SONGS AND SONNETS

Structure

5.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit aims:

- To introduce students to major movements related to poetry in English, works and poets through study of selected texts.
- To create literary sensibility for appreciation in students and expose them to artistic and innovative use of language by writers and to various worldviews.
- To instill values and develop human concern in students through exposure to literary texts.
- To enhance literary and linguistic competence of students.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Elizabethan Age is the time period associated with the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558–1603) and is often considered to be a golden age in English history. It was an age considered to be the height of the English Renaissance, and saw the full flowering of English literature and English poetry. The Age witnessed the rise and growth of the feelings of patriotism and nationalism among the English people and brought about an unprecedented progress in almost all the branches of its variegated life. The age is considered as "The Golden Age" in the history of English literature. It was the age of Queen Elizabethan 1st (1558-1603) comprising the half of 16th Century. It was an age in which the mind of the people was set free from the trammels of Medievalism from free of religious persecution from fear of poverty and starvation and from the fear of foreign invasion. It was an era of social, political and religious peace. Men were now free to devote themselves to art and literatures. It was also an era of great adventures, travel and discovery which fired the imagination of the people and impelled them to creative activity. It is therefore called a "Golden Age of English Literature." The Elizabethan Age extends from 1558-1603. It can be divided into

two periods. The first period may be called "Age of Spenser" (1558-1579) and the second may be called "Age of Shakespeare" (1579-1603). In the first part we have the time of preparation of the spring tide of Elizabethan literature, the second is the time of full blossom and fruition. In this great age there were many factors which contributed to the richness in literature. There was a 'Renaissance' (revival or rebirth) of ancient Greek and Roman literature, mythology and culture and this served as a source of inspiration to the countless writers of the period. There was also an awakening of the human mind to the vastness, beauty and wonder of the world as a result of adventure undertaken by the sailors of England and other countries of Europe. The whole age was marked by rich poetic sensibility, nature appetite for learning, literature and love for aesthetic faculty. England was poetically barren in the 15th Century, but with the revival of the art and learning a gleam of hope was produced. There was such a growth of poets and singers that this age was called "Nest of Singing Birds". By virtue of its wonderful fertility, variety and splendor of its production, this period as whole ranks one of the greatest age in the history of world's literature. Men like Spenser, Bacon and Shakespeare grew from boyhood to the youth in the early years of Elizabethan Age and they produced wonderful works of literature by the 16th Century.

The Elizabethan poetry is neither classical nor romantic. It lacks the precision and economy, the mental repose of the finest classical art but following the main tradition of antiquity and the Middle Ages. It is addressed to reason as a universal moral guide. The Elizabethan poet is continually, reasoning, persuading, demonstrating analogies and logical connections. Even his imagery and rhythm are marshalled into argument.

5.2 POETS OF THE ELIZABETHAN POETRY

The poets who contributed much to the growth of Elizabethan Poetry were Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard Earl of Surrey who revives interest in poetry by writing sonnets and lyrics. It is they who for the first time introduced "Sonnet" in England. It is they who paved the way for the full flowering of poetry in the hands of Sidney, Spenser and Shakespeare.

5.2.1 Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542)

Thomas Wyatt was the first poet who introduced the 'sonnet' in English poetry by restoring beauty, grace and nobility to English Poetry. He visited Italy, France and Greece and like Chaucer he wanted to fashion English poetry on the Italian pattern or on the model of Petrarch. It was by the sonnet that lyricism again entered into English poetry. It paved the way for music and passion subsequently developed by Sydney and Spenser. Wyatt's poems were short but fairly numerous. They were for the most part, translations and imitations both of Italian poetry, especially the love sonnet. Wyatt's love sonnets ninety six (96) in all were published posthumously in 1557 in "Tottel's Miscellany". These love sonnets of Wyatt paved the way for the love sonnets of Sidney and Spenser. In them the fire of love burned with a glow, and it was to the credit of Wyatt that he imparted emotion and passion, fervor and enthusiasm to English poetry. In these sonnets we hear for the first personal note in poetry was introduced by this poet.

5.2.2 Henry Howard Earl of Surrey (1517-1547)

He was son of Thomas Howard. His work consists of sonnets and miscellaneous poems in various meters, notable for their grace and finish. He credited with Wyatt the merit of bringing the sonnets from Italy into England. He gave up the Petrarchan model popularized by Wyatt and prepared the ground of Shakespearean sonnet of three quatrains followed by a couplet. "In the development of English Verse", says E. Albert, "Surrey represents a further stage a higher political faculty increased ease and refinement and the introduction of two metrical forms of capital importance- the English form of the sonnets and blank verse." Surrey does not have Wyatt's energy

and independence but he is more graceful and sensitive and greater artist than Wyatt. His sonnets were grounded in love and were written to Geraldine or Lady Elizabeth Fitzgerald. They were characterized by emotional flights of imagination marked by an elegiac note. Side by side, we notice in them a genuine love for nature seen earlier in Chaucer's Poetry. He combined love and nature in his personal sonnets, and gave them the impress of his personality. Surrey also composed impersonal sonnets characterized by satirical touches to contemporary personages. He was the first English poet to use 'Blank-Verse' in his translation of the two books of the "Aeneid". "Tottel's Miscellany" was published in 1557, a date which marks the public beginning of modern English Poetry. It contained the poems of Wyatt, Surrey and several of their followers. It is a collection of some three hundred (300) lyrics, songs and sonnets.

In addition to these poets there are poets like Thomas Sackville, George Gascoigne, Daniel and Michael Drayton who their own way have made notable contribution to Elizabethan Poetry.

5.2.3 Thomas Sackville (1536-1608)

Thomas Sackville (1536-1608): In bulk Sackville's poetry does not amount so much, but in merit it is of much consequence. He is the author of two significant works, "The Mirror of Magistrates" and "Induction". Both are composed in the rhyme royal stanza, are melancholy and elegiac in sprit and archaic in language, but have a severe nobility of thought and grandeur of conception and of language quite unknown since the days of Chaucer. His "The Mirror of Magistrates" is a powerful picture of the truth of his time where the poet describers his meeting with famous English men who had suffered misfortune. "Induction" is more powerful than "The Mirror of Magistrates". It is written in seven line stanzas (ababbcc) which Chaucer had used with ease and grace.

5.2.4 Sir Philip Sydney (1554-1586)

Philip Sydney was the chief of an elegant coterie and exercised an influence which was almost supreme during his short life. He was the most commanding literary figure before the time of Spenser and Shakespeare. Like the best of the Elizabethans, Sydney was successful in more than one branch of literature, but of his works was published after his death. His first finest achievement in poetry was "Astrophel and Stella" a collection of 108 love sonnets. It is a collection of songs and sonnets evidently addressed to one person. The sonnets of Sydney have passion for Penelope, who was by the time the wife of Lord Rich. The publication of "Astrophel and Stella" at once caught the imagination of the people and gave rise to the vogue of the sonnet. Everybody tried his hand at it mostly of the Elizabethan sonnets. These sonnets which owe much to Petrarch and Ronsard in tone and style, place Sidney as the greatest Elizabethan sonneteer except Shakespeare. They reveal a true lyric emotion found in a language delicately archaic. Sydney is undoubtedly the greatest literary figure between Wyatt and Spenser.

5.2.5 Edmund Spenser (1552-1599)

It was Charles Lamb who called Spenser "the 'Poet's Poet' and in giving him that honored tittle, the prince of English essayists was not wrong. Spenser is regarded as the 'poet's poet' and the 'second father of English Poetry'. Chaucer being the father because Spenser rendered incalculable service to English poetry in a variety of ways and left behind him models of poetic excellence to be imitated and followed by a host of poets who came in his wake. In Spenser's poetry we have the best and the finest qualities that are generally associated with good and great poetry, and in a way are blowout over in the works of subsequent poets. The poetic faculty in Spenser is so abundantly and predominantly present that we cannot think of any other poet save Spenser to occupy the pride of place among English poets. The main poetical works of Spenser are "Shepherd's Calendar",

"The Four Hymns", Mother Husband's Tale", "The Complaints", "The Amoretti", "The Epithalamion" and the masterpiece "The Faerie Queene". 'The Faerie Queene' is a great work on which Spenser's fame rests. The original plan of the poets included 24 books, each of which was to recount the adventure and triumphs of a knight who represented moral Virtue. The plot of the poem is rather complicated and obscure. But the main aim of the poet becomes moral edification through and allegorical device. Externally, "The Faerie Queen" has the plot of an epic and internally it is rich in pictorial qualities, music, and wonderful rich imagination. "The Faerie Queen" is really the masterpiece of Spenser.

All these poets and their contributions clearly show how there were three categories of poets– Sonneteers, Lyricists, and Narrative Poets. Sonnet for the first time in England was introduced by Wyatt and Surrey in the first half of the 16th Century. Later on Shakespeare wrote about one hundred and fifty four (154) sonnets by making a slight alteration in the pattern. Most of the Elizabethan poets followed the Italian pattern of Octave and Sestet. But Shakespeare broke the sonnets into three quatrains, joined by a couplet. His 154 sonnets were first published in 1609, and as Wordsworth has put it, it was with this key that the poet "unlocked his heart". It is in the sonnets alone that the poet directly expresses his feeling. Besides their sincerity of tone, they have literary qualities of the highest order. Shakespeare's sonnet sequence is, "the castle which encloses the most precious pearls of Elizabethan lyricism. Some of them unsurpassed by any lyricist."

Features of Elizabethan Poetry:

Elizabethan poetry is notable for many features, including the sonnet form, blank verse, and the use of classical material.

Elizabethan Sonnets: Perhaps the best-known innovation of Elizabethan poetry is the Elizabethan, or English, sonnet. Thomas Wyatt, a court poet for Henry VIII, introduced the Italian sonnet to England, but Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, reworked it into its typical English form. Elizabethan sonnets are written in iambic pentameter and consist of 14 lines, often divided into three quatrains and a couplet. The lines rhyme using a scheme: abab cdcd efef gg. The first eight lines are called the "octet" and the final six lines are the "sestet." Elizabethan sonnets often feature a turn, or "volta," between the octet and sestet, where the material introduced in the octet is seen from a different perspective in the sestet. In some sonnets, this turn comes in the final couplet, such as in William Shakespeare's Sonnet 130, "My Mistress' Eyes Are Nothing Like the Sun." Elizabethan sonnets also appear in the drama of the time, such as at the beginning of "Romeo and Juliet." Blank Verse: Although iambic pentameter had been used in English poetry since the Middle Ages, the Earl of Surrey used it in a new way in his translation of Virgil's "Aeneid": He left the lines unrhymed. This poetic form, called "blank verse," has the advantage of freeing poets from the burden of rephrasing thoughts so that they rhyme and was held by some to be the purest approximation of natural human speech. In the Elizabethan era, proper blank verse was Shakespeare's and Christopher Marlowe's meter of choice for drama; it gave speech a serious, elevated tone, while leaving prose to be used for those with lower social rankings and for comedy. Blank verse persisted in popularity far past the Elizabethan era, used by such notable works as John Milton's "Paradise Lost" and William Wordsworth's "Prelude." Forming Present with the Past: Although the term "Renaissance" wasn't used until the 19th Century, it accurately describes at least one feature of Elizabethan literature: It often perceived itself as giving "rebirth" to classical matter to usher in a new era of literature in English. This quality is perhaps most easily seen in its appropriation of the past. Sir Philip Sidney employs the conventions of classical poetry in his sonnets, such as his invocation to the muse in "Astrophel and Stella": "Fool, said my Muse to me, looke in thy heart, and write." Similarly looking backwards, Edmund Spenser's greatest work, the epic "Faerie Queene," is full of archaisms -- intentionally old-looking spelling or syntax, such as

"yclept" for "called." He uses these to create the sense of an earlier, less spoiled realm in which he can set his allegorical history of England.

5.3 IMPACT OF THE ELIZABETHAN SONGS AND SONNETS

Some of the most significant themes in the Elizabethan sonnet sequences include love, time, the value of writing, and the eternalization of beauty. Romantic love is one of the central themes; many sonnets of the Elizabethan era wrote about the frustrations of unreciprocated love.

The Elizabethan age saw the flowering of poetry (the sonnet, the Spenserian stanza, dramatic blank verse), was a golden age of drama (especially for the plays of Shakespeare), and inspired a wide variety of splendid prose (from historical chronicles, versions of the Holy Scriptures, pamphlets, and literary criticism too.

5.4 LET'S SUM UP

Elizabethan poetry is notable for many features, including the sonnet form, blank verse, the use of classical material, but perhaps the best-known innovation of Elizabethan poetry is the Elizabethan, or English, sonnet. In the 18th Century interest in Elizabethan poetry was rekindled through the scholarship of Thomas Warton and others. Virgil's Aeneid, Thomas Campion's metrical experiments, and Spenser's Shepherd's Calendar and plays like Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra are all examples of the influence of classicism on Elizabethan poetry. Elizabethan age we can say that time was classical period and at also modern period. Thus, Elizabethan period was very rich and powerful as classical period was.

5.5 QUESTIONS

1. What was the condition of the sonnet during the Elizabethan period?
2. Which is the famous sonnet of Elizabethan age?
3. Who wrote the first sonnet?
4. What are the types of sonnets?
5. Who first used the word sonnet?
6. Who is the sonnet named after?

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BLOCK-II INTRODUCTION

This block is dedicated to the exploration of the Romantic Age, Precursors of the Romantic Poetry, the French Revolution and the growth of the Novel as a literary genre. This block further deals with the history of the English Novel, its meaning, its main characteristics and the rise of the Middle Class and its growing interest in the Novel. The novel changed during the Romantic Era from the social realism and satire of authors from the eighteenth century, such as Fielding and Smollett, to a more introspective and emotionally charged literary form that placed an emphasis on personal experience, creativity, and the study of the human psyche. This period also saw the rise of the women novelists who brought new approach to the form. Themes such as the relationship between the individual and society, the importance of education and childhood in forming character, the power of memory and imagination, and the intricate interaction between emotion and reason in human behavior were explored. This block is divided into following four units:

Unit – 6 deals with the growth of the novel during the Romantic Age and the cause of its growing popularity. It also explains Gothic Fiction and emergence of the women writers of the novel during the period and the main developments in the field of the novel writing. Romantic novels often centered on the experiences and emotional lives of individuals, exploring themes of love, loss and personal grief. Many novels engaged with social issues, exploring class structures, gender roles, and the impact of societal forces on individuals.

Unit – 7 focuses on the Precursors of the Romantic Poetry. The discussion further expands to the characteristics of the Pre-Romantics and their major works. It also presents a comprehensive view of the Romantic Movement, its beginning and its source of inspiration. Several writers laid the groundwork for the Romantic Movement by exploring themes of emotion, nature, individualism, and the subjective experience, paving the way for the later Romantic poets to fully embrace these ideas.

Unit – 8 Provides a detailed introduction to Romanticism and the French revolution. The French Revolution and Romanticism were closely related, with the Romantic Movement, greatly impacted by the Revolution's principles of equality, liberty, and fraternity. The emphasis on individual expression, passion, and nature during the Revolution served as inspiration for romanticism, which emerged in the late 18th and early 19th centuries as a reaction against the Enlightenment's emphasis on reason and classicism. Romantic writers and artists, who frequently criticized social and political conventions and defended individual freedom, found resonance in the fundamental ideals of the French Revolution: liberty, equality, and fraternity.

Unit – 9 focuses on the Romantic literary forms such as Prose, Poetry, Drama and Fiction. This unit deals also with the Romanticism in the English Literature, salient features of the English Romanticism, Romantic writers and their works, the Second Generation of Poets, the Romantic Novel and novelists, the Romantic Drama and the Prose writers of the Age. Romantic literature blossomed in Latin America and the United States after developing throughout Europe. Poetry, fiction, plays, folklore, fairy tales, history, autobiographies, and other literary works were among the works produced by the Romantic authors.

UNIT-6

GROWTH TO THE NOVEL

Structure

6.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, students will be able to discuss the following topics:

- Know about the Novel as a literary genre.
- Acquaint with the major novelists in English Literature through a study of the novels representative of the age.
- Develop in the student the ability among students to interpret, analyze and evaluate works of fiction from the perspective of literary history and theory.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

During the Romantic Period the novel grew in popularity and became one of the major sources of entertainment for middle class citizens. Authors began to tailor their writing to appeal the audience. Sir Walter Scott gained popularity during this time, both in Britain and around Europe. He mainly wrote within the genre of historical romances and made this a viable form of fiction for later writers. Scott also focused on his home country of Scotland, often writing about its beauty and romanticism. Scott's first major novel was *Waverly (1814)*, which is set during the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745. The rebellious group sought to restore the Stuart dynasty to Charles Edward Stuart. The hero, Edward Waverly, is commissioned to the army and sent to Scotland in 1745. While there, he joins the Jacobite groups even though he knows they will fail and is imprisoned; however, he is ultimately freed. The novel ends with a marriage between Waverly and a Baron's daughter, Rose, representing the rational, realistic present of Scotland post-rebellion. While this was his first success, generally *The Antiquary* (1816), Old Mortality (1816), and *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818) are considered his masterpieces.

During the second half of the 18th Century, gothic fiction began to increase in popularity in Great Britain. This came from a look back to Medieval times. Often this genre would combine

supernatural and mysterious elements with the castles and dungeons of the past. The gothic novel combines the intense emotions of terror, anguish, fear, and even love. Coleridge and Byron both contributed works to this canon, but John William Polidori's "The Vampyre" (1819) and Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" (1818) stand out as two of the genre's most enduring pieces. Polidori's work has importance for creating the vampire literary genre. Bram Stoker's "*Dracula*", published during the Victorian Period, would continue to generate popularity around vampirism.

Shelley combines elements of love and the supernatural in her gothic novel, "Frankenstein". Dr. Victor Frankenstein harnesses the power of life and uses it to animate a creature he has built. When the creature is cast away and refused companionship for his hideous physical features, he becomes murderous and determines to ruin Victor's life.

The Romantic Period saw more successful women writers, a precursor to their popularity in the Victorian era. The most significant female writer during this period was Jane Austen. Writing toward the end of the period, Austen did not always adhere to the strict Romantic Period guidelines and mocked some of the more extravagant plots of previous writers. Instead, Austen chose to highlight the everyday lives of average people, making a turn toward social realism. Her novels include relatable heroines with adventures that the ordinary reader would likely encounter. She was also able to better depict the lives of women in this way. She understood that women had very little class mobility at the time and used many of her novels as a way to show this. Some of her famous novels include *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814), *Emma* (1815), *and Northanger Abbey* (1817). *Pride and Prejudice* is still widely read today and tells the story of Elizabeth Bennet, the second eldest daughter among five. When Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy move into the neighborhood, the Bennet family hopes they will wed two of the unmarried daughters. Although Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy clash heads early on in the novel, they eventually fall in love and get married. Austen's novel Emma is also very popular and shows the consequences of meddling with love. Emma thinks that she could be a matchmaker, but her efforts ultimately fail and lead to heartbreak along the way. Although in the beginning of the novel she vows never to marry, by the end she realizes she is in love with Mr. Knightly and the two do get married.

The European Romantic Movement reached America in the early 19th Century. It encompassed many of the same ideals, genres, and styles as the European Romanticism and appealed to the Americans' revolutionary spirit. The English Romantic Period ended with the coronation of Queen Victoria in 1837. The Industrial Revolution was beginning to be fully felt by the people of England as the working class became dominant in the culture. Most significant would be the introduction of the steam printing press and the railroads, which would make it possible to easily make and distribute texts.

It is not by chance that the English Novel dates back to the Eighteenth Century. This does not imply that nothing existed in the form of a novel before 1700. Then, Daniel Defoe made novel come to existence, completely. Nothing comes from nothing, even the greatest masterpieces of literature starts off from what was available from the previous eras. The novelist in the Eighteenth Century had on one hand, the medieval romance and its successors; the courtly novel of Italy and France and the English stories. The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries were developed and grown out of some important sources: Lyly's *Euphues*, Sidney's *Arcadia* and Green's *Menaphon*. On the other hand, the rogue novels and the Picaresque tradition were two other significant factors to the rise of the English Novel. Certain other factors were helpful to the rise of the English novel; from them; translations from the classics such as *The Golden Ass* of Petronius, Boccaccio as well as the authorized version of the *Bible.*

6.2 MEANING OF THE NOVEL

The etymology of the word 'novel' comes from the French word '*nouvelle*,' which in Italian is *novella* that means "*new*." Due to the novelty of what this term represented, the word '*Novel*' was coined to refer to it. It is an elongated form of fictional narrative written in a prose format. Until the 18th Century, the word referred only to shorter fictional forms used to depict love and life in its rawest forms than romance, which was mostly about stories with adventure, laughter, and joy. The birth of the novel in the 18th Century garnered features of old romance and became one of the most preferred literary genres. This dominant genre in English literature became one of the bedrock of budding imaginative writing. The rise of the novel has been daunting – with being about 250 years old in English, the fight for its survival has been prominent. After the challenges faced by the novel to make its mark, it later became a primary source of entertainment in the 19th Century. As stated earlier, Robinson Crusoe is one novel that spun the evolution of the English novel to a greater dimension. In line with this, other novels sprouted more confidently, exploring creativity, genres, and themes. Here we will take a look at some of the factors that further grew the blowout of the English novel.

6.3 DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL

It is possible to say that the novel as a literary genre emerged in the beginning of the Eighteenth Century. The industrial revolution can be said, paved the way to the rise of the middle-class and it also created a demand for people's desire for reading subjects related to their everyday experiences. The novel, therefore, developed as a piece of prose fiction that presented characters in real-life events and situations. Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* are some of early English novels. The novel is realistic prose fiction in such a way that it can demonstrate its relation to real life.

The Eighteenth- Century great novels are semi anti-romance, or it was the first time that the novel emerged and distributed widely and largely among its readers; reading public. Moreover, with the increase of the literacy, the demand on the reading material increased rapidly, among well-to- do women, who were novel readers of the time. Thus, theatre was not such feasible form of entertainment but novel was due to its large audience and its blowout all over the land in country-houses. In other words, middle was such an important factor behind the growth of the novel as a new form of art.

The social and intellectual currents of the age were linked for creating something new and different. Those who carried out the action became individualized; they were interpreted in and all their complexity and the social pressure on them were minutely detailed. When people wanted to hear stories of those who are not too different from themselves, in a community recognizably a kin to their own, then the novel was born. There are also other reasons and factors that influenced the rise of the English novel. The invention of traveling library was one of those and via trade; it was developed more than before. The social milieu and social condition of the life of the middle-class were very much affected by the rise of the English novel. These people in the Eighteenth Century were acquiring their education, what they were acquiring was less exclusively classical in context than the education of the upper-class. Women readers were considered as a crucial factor in providing readership. A better education for women was coincided with a period of a greater leisure for women in middle and upper ranks. The greater leisure for women left a time space, which needed to be filled in. Men were also educated and had an intension to see beyond the narrow local interests and profession to an inspired

motivation. Both men and women were receptive to literary forms, which would open up to them recent and real worlds outside their own world.

The reproduction of newspapers in the Eighteenth Century is evidence on the rise of the novel and so is the popularity of the periodicals. The seed of Richardson's *Pamela* was a plan to write a series of letters, which provided examples of the correct way of continuing in various delicate social situations. The novelists also believe that their task is not only to inform but also to indicate morality. Middle-class people considered usefulness significant; this would include moral usefulness. The readers were introduced by the novelists to new social worlds, providing the moral framework within which that behavior. The novel was dealing with the immediate details as no earlier fiction has been, as a result, it becomes long.

As a result, in the Eighteenth Century, many reasonable changes took place in strange plots and ideas of heroic tragedy. Defoe described 'The Great Plague of London' in the journal of the plague year (1722), then his *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), a better and more famous book. The story of the book relied on the real life event. It is about the story of Alexander Selkirk, a Scottish sailor who quarreled with his captain, was, in fact, put into the island of Juan Fernandez near Chile, and he lived there alone for four years.

Richard Steele and Joseph Addison worked together to produce *The Tatler*, a collection of essays without too much ornament, which helped in the production of the novel. Dr. Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* was written in (1755). Some of the best English letters were written during this Century. Swift and Defoe wrote stories of adventure. A good prose style was made ready to use in 'Spectator' by both Dryden and Chesterfield. And, Samuel Richardson wrote *Pamela* in (1740); a real novel, which was written in the form of letters. When these letters appeared women were excited to read them and listen to the readers of those letters.

Richardson also wrote *Clarissa* and Fielding's great novel appeared in the name of *Tom Jones* in (1749). The fourth novelist of this time was Laurence Sterne. His astonishing books are as confusing as life. Another important novel of the time is *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1761-2), by Oliver Goldsmith. Below are several factors that contributed towards the rise of the English novel: The rise of the literacy, the novel is essentially a written form, unlike poetry, which exists for centuries prior to the development of writing, and still flourishes in oral cultures today. There have been cases of illiterate people gathering to hear novel read- part of Dickens's audience was of this sort and daring the Victorian period the habit of reading aloud was much more blowout than it is today, but the novel typically, written by one individual in private and read silently by another.

Printing was another crucial factor that contributed to the rise of the English novel. The modern novel was the child of the printing press, which alone can produce the vast numbers of copies needed to satisfy literate publication up rise that they can afford.

A market economy was the third factor. The sociology of the novel is based very much upon a market relationship between author and reader, mediated through publications, in contrast to earlier methods of financing publication or supporting authors such as Patronage, or subscription. A market economy increases the relative freedom and isolation of the writer and decreases his immediate dependence upon particular individuals, groups or interests.

The Rise of Individualism was also very significant in the emergence of the English novel. Ian Watt sees a typical of the novel that it includes individualization of characters and the detailed presentation of the environment. The novel is more associated with the town rather than

to the village, and in some points, they are alike, for example, both involve huge numbers of people leading interdependent lives, influencing and relying upon one another.

Watt (1957), in his book, *Rise of the Novel* states that Defoe's "fiction" is the first, which presents us with a picture of both-individual life in its larger perspective as a historical process, and in its closer view, which shows the process being acted out against the background of the most ephemeral thoughts and action.

Furthermore, Sanders says that the claim made the successive generations of literary historians and critics whom Defoe is the first true master of the English novel who has a limited validity. His prose fiction, provided in his late middle age, sprang from an experimental involvement in other literary forms; most notably the travel- book. His novels included elements of all of these forms. Nor was he the only begetter of a form which it is now recognized had a long succession of both male and female progenitors. He may in *Robinson Crusoe*, have perfected an impression of realism by adapting the Puritan self—confession narrates to suit the mode of a fictional moral tract, but he would in no sense have seen fiction as superior to, or distinct from, his essays in instructive biography.

Moreover, Richetti claims that no one can say what led Defoe at 59 to write a long narrative pretending to be the memoirs of a shipwrecked English planter from Brazil on a deserted island off the coast of South America. After Harley's fall from power in 1714, Defoe's epistolary record goes nearly blank, and we have little to go on for those five years until *Robinson Crusoe* appears in 1719. We do know that Defoe was not idle; he was never that, and indeed writing was his main livelihood. Having been recruited by the Whig ministry to act as a subversive mole within the Tory opposition press, he wrote extensively for what Novak identifies as ‘the most forceful anti- government newspaper’, the Weekly Journal, or Mist’s Weekly Journal, so called after its editor, Nathaniel Mist. Also among the various pamphlets and tracts he published separately from his periodical journalism in those years, he found time to write the substantial and very popular conduct book in dramatic. But in 1719 Defoe had never done anything quite like Robinson Crusoe, no fiction so elaborate, no narrative so devoted to evoking the life of a private person with no topical or political importance, and no extended prose narrative so seemingly separate from political polemic and religious controversy, although there are clearly religious themes as well as political implications in Crusoe's narrative.

Richetti also states that the latter, especially, dragging out for modern readers and are never obviously polemical. There is, in retrospect however, inevitability in Defoe’s turning to extended narrative fiction in the third decade of the Eighteenth Century. As we have seen, he had a native talent and deep attraction for narrative. *The Review* and much of his other political journalism are often enough full of narrative and vivid dramatic impersonation. There are a number of shorter works. Moreover, from the second decade of the Eighteenth Century that represented finger exercises in preparation for what can now be seen as his later career as a writer of imaginative fiction. These are political tracts that have a basic narrative form of an insignificant but occasionally interesting sort.

Skilton (1977), states that Robinson Crusoe is certainly the first novel in the sense that it is the first fictional narrative in which the ordinary person's activities are the centre of continuous literary attention. Before that, in the early Eighteenth Century, authors like Pope, Swift, Addison and Steele looked back to the Rome of Caesar Augustus (27 BC—14 AD) as a golden age. That period is called the Augustan Age. Literature was very different since it focused on mythology and epic heroes. However, to what extent can Robinson Crusoe be called the "first novel" and how is it different from all that have been done so far? Besides, what are the

evolutions in the novel genre leading to Victorian novels, like *Pride and Prejudice* published almost one hundred years later (1813) in terms of style, themes and concerns?

Augustan writers, before Daniel Defoe, were very protective of the status quo and their novels were philosophical and religious, based upon a myth of the eternal fitness of things. By contrast, Defoe stood for revolutionary change, economic individualism, social mobility, trade, and freedom of consciousness. For Swift, Defoe was 'the fellow who was pilloried; I have forgotten his name'. He represented at once a social literary and intellectual challenge to the Augustan world, and the Augustans reacted to him accordingly.

In *Robinson Crusoe,* Defoe deals with major points of Western civilization like trade, mercantile capitalism since at that time, a great attempt was made to dominate other continents, blowout culture, beliefs, like, for example, when Robinson tries to convert Friday into Christianity, as he considers him a savage. In the Eighteenth Century, Britain economically depended on slave trade, which was abolished on the early 1800s. Therefore, Daniel Defoe was familiar with this practice, even though he did not active criticise it. There is consequently, no surprise that, Robinson treats Friday as his slave.

However, Crusoe was able to recognize Friday's humanity, though he does not see his slavery as a contradiction. Robinson Crusoe was written within a context of a European colonialism well established around the globe.

Next, material wealth is a sign of prestige and power in Robinson's mind. For instance, he often lists his belongings, like the amount of land ploughed. His provisions and he stores the coins found on various wrecks. On top of that, he calls his 'base', his 'castle', and eventually considers himself a 'King'. Therefore, material power is an important element as well as religion and faith in the novel. Robinson rejects his father's advice and religious teachings at the beginning of the novel, in order to travel and have some adventure and wealth. Although, his shipwreck can be considered as a moral punishment and his disobedience as a sin, the protagonist did accumulate wealth and did survive at the end of the novel. Thus, the fact that he was punished can be argued and discussed. Robinson's opinion about religion is very clear.

He is a semi-puritan figure and tries to blowout his convictions on the island to convert into Christianity. Friday, who is very rational, the hero simply refuses Friday's own beliefs, thinking that his religion is the best one. This thought may be due to the fact that British people believed that they had a right and a duty to transmit their knowledge, culture and Skilton continues and says that *Robinson Crusoe* was written in the first-person singular. As a consequence, we constantly have Robinson's point of view and opinion about the events happening. We have to wonder whether the protagonist, through which the story is described, may be reliable or not, and if we can trust him. If we had Friday's point of view instead, it is clear that we would have a complete different opinion about Robinson. Probyn states that Chales Gildon, in his book, Defoe's *First Substantive Critic*, interpreted *Robinson Crusoe* as an allegory of Defoe's own life, but Ian Watt endorses the economic theorists' view of the novel as illustrating homo-economicus and the rise of economic individualism. Not everyone insisted on seeing this novel as a metaphor: Lesclie Stephan's essay of 1868 reported that Crusoe was a ' book for boys rather than men', short of any high intellectual interest ... One of the most charming of books'. It is essentially, of course, a superb adventure story charged with the primary appeal of all narrative fiction: suspense, individual, resourcefulness, threatening disasters, an eventual triumph. Even Dr. Johnson wished it had been longer, Robinson, like Gulliver after him.

The novel today is considered one of the most important art forms in the English language. This is because it affects grand aspects of the language and is now considered an integral part of the art. However, the rise of the English novel occurred primarily in the 18th Century; this does not mean that there was no form of a novel before this time. It only means that there was an increased release of novels and novelists during this period. The English novel is an integral part of English literature. It has evolved to date in varied modifications and genres. The novel is a prosaic work of art that deals with the imagination to explore the diverse experiences of humans through interwoven events of a select people and setting. Also, it is a genre of fiction that has been a medium of entertainment, information, or a blend of both. In this light, any fictive art piece that is long enough to be adapted as a book can be said to have achieved "novelhood." Since the inception of the novel, it has grown to be adapted in forms of romance, thriller, science fiction (sci-fi), and historical, picaresque, psychological, gothic, and epistolary, novel of manners, among others.

6.4 A HIGHLIGHT OF THE 18TH CENTURY

The rise of the English novel occurred primarily in the 18th Century; this does not mean that there was no form of novels before this time. It only means that there was an increased release of novels and novelists during this period. The 18th Century was a period that lasted from 1685 – 1815. Most often, the term is used to refer to the 1700s. This is the Century between January 1, 1700, and December 31, 1799. This period witnessed a great revolution that shook the society structure of its time. The elements of enlightened thinking were at the fore of this revolution. This was experienced in the French, American, and Haitian revolutions. On a larger scale, slave trading and human trafficking were at their peak. These revolutions were pivotal, so much so that they began to challenge the structure that threatened to asphyxiate its emergence from the monarchical system to the aristocratic privileges, especially the systems that nurtured to flame the slave trade. In retrospect, a more profound sense of appreciation can be ascribed to this revolution that was seen as a threat but somehow waded through all the hurdles in its way. Without this revolution, a lot of privileges we partake in presently would not have been a thing to imagine, think, and talk more of experience. Thanks to the revolution of the 18th Century, we have and experience life with its modern perks.

This Century was called the 'Century of Light' or the 'Century of Reason.' By this, you can tell that several idiosyncrasies were changed from being accepted as the norm, ranging from European politics, philosophy, communications, and science experience a total upheaval throughout the termed "long 18th Century" (1688-1815). This Age of Reason, also called the Enlightenment bore cutting-edge schools of thought. From thinkers in Britain to France and even throughout Europe. These thinkers began to question the traditional normalcy they were born into and had adopted through their lives. These thinkers tasted the efficacy of rational thinking, logic and knew that their lives and reality as a whole were never going to be the same. They discovered that their lives as humans and others' lives, in all its vicissitude, can be enhanced through rational thinking. In an essay called, 'What Is Enlightenment?' (1784), Immanuel Kant, the German philosopher summarized the era's dominance succinctly, as the: 'Dare to know! Have courage to use your own reason!' era. Not only Immanuel Kant's essay came to thrive, but also an influx of other essays. This era saw the evolution of literature. Also, it gave life to numerous essays, inventions, books, laws, scientific discoveries, revolutions, and wars. The major revolutions, the American and French Revolutions, were influenced by the 18th Century. Just like childbirth, a mother goes through all the birth pangs in lieu of the joy she gets to carry through life. The 18th Century is symbolic of this because all the rationale behind the chaos finally gave birth to the 19th- Century, called The Romantic Era or Romanticism.

6.5 HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL

The 18th Century marked the period where novels were distributed on a large scale, and a certain level of demand arose among English readers. This demand is also due to people's desire for reading about everyday events, events which went on to shape the lives and actions of fictional characters. Some of the earliest novels include *Robinson Crusoe and Tom Jones* which were respectively written by Daniel Defoe and Henry Fielding. *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe was first published on 25 April 1719. The first edition credited the work's protagonist Robinson Crusoe as its author and therefore many readers thought that the book was the biography of a real person. It happened that this Century was replete with literature in all its forms – poetry, drama, satire, and novels especially. This period saw the development of the modern novel as a major literary genre. Many novelists who revolutionized the sphere of this literature genre can be dated back to this Century. Novelists like:

1. Thomas Malory, *Le Morte d'Arthur* also known as *Le Morte D' Arthur*
2. William Baldwin, who authored *Beware the Cat*
3. Margaret Cavendish – *The Description of a New World*, also called *The Blazing-World*
4. John Lyly, *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit* (1578), and *Euphues and His England* (1580)
5. Jonathan Swift – *Gulliver's Travels*
6. Philip Sidney -*The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (a.k.a. Arcadia) (1581)
7. Jonathan Swift – *A Tale of a Tub published in 1704*
8. William Caxton's translation of *Geoffroy de la Tour Landry – The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, originally in French and was published in 1483
9. Daniel Defoe -*The Consolidator in* 1705
10. John Bunyan's – *The Pilgrim's Progress from This World, to That Which Is to Come,* published in 1678
11. Aphra Behn's – *Oroonoko or the Royal Slave* was published in 1688.
12. Anonymous, *Vertue Rewarded* 1693

These are some of the earliest novels, including *Robinson Crusoe* and *Tom Jones*, written by Daniel Defoe and Henry Fielding, respectively. Also, the theater as an art form was not available to every member of the population. The novel was popular because it could reach a larger audience, even those who could not afford a ticket into a theater. It is also important to note that during this period, drama had begun to decline in England. The growth of the novel can also be attributed to the need of individuals to create something new, something different.

The social and intellectual circle longed for something completely new yet individualized. The people wanted stories that mirrored their own lives, stories that had a recognizable nature, and this need birthed the novel. Furthermore, the rise of the middle class in the 18th Century have a direct effect on the rise of novels. David Daiches, a historian said, the novel "was in a large measure the product of the middle class, appealing to middle-class ideals and sensibilities, a patterning of imagined events set against a clearly realized social background and taking its view of what was significant in human behavior from agreed public attitudes." Another factor responsible is the popularity of newspapers in the 17th Century, and the growth of Periodicals. For example, the novel, *Pamela* by Samuel Richardson was originally intended as a series of letters, but instead, it was made into a novel. The newspapers helped the reading culture among the lower class. The

democratic movement that gripped England after the Glorious Revolution of 1689 could also be regarded as one factor that gave rise to the novel in the 18th Century. This is because the democratic system emphasized commoners' stories, who were the subjects in many of the novels written during this period. Also, the novels by Richardson, Sterne, Smollet, and Fielding center around commoners' lives, rather than that of the ruling class. Conclusively, the rise of realism in the 18th Century also affected the growth of the novel. Factors such as reason, intellect, and satirical spirit were all adopted into the novel form and were principal subjects in the realist movement. The rise of the English novel was affected by a number of factors; one of the most significant is the Medieval romance, and the courtly tales of Italy and France. Translations from classical Greek materials also gave to the rise of the English novel.

6.6 THE RISE OF THE MIDDLE CLASS

One thing that stood out for the audience of the 18th- Century was how these authors were the regular everyday people. Since the theater as an art form was not available to every member of the population, the novel became succor. The people who made up the novels' audience were the middle class and those considered to be at the lowest rung of society's strata. The combination of these classes of people was en masse larger than the upper echelon. This made these novels reach a larger audience, even those who could not afford a ticket into a theater. It is also important to note that during this period, drama had begun to decline in England. There was a tilt that no longer sated the theatrical audience but seemed to wet the parched thirst of the rapid novel audience. The growth of the English novel can also be attributed to individuals' need to create something new, something different. The social and intellectual circle longed for something completely new yet individualized. Also, the people wanted stories that mirrored their own lives, stories which had a recognizable nature to theirs, and this need birthed the novel. Furthermore, the rise of the middle class in the 18th Century directly affected the rise of novels. David Daiches, a historian, said, the novel "was in a large measure the product of the middle class, appealing to middle-class ideals and sensibilities, a patterning of imagined events set against a clearly realized social background and taking its view of what was significant in human behavior from agreed public attitudes."

Of all the books that took precedence in the 18th Century, *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe, published in 1719, was one phenomenal event. *Robinson Crusoe's tale* is a story narrated in the first person, which makes it very personal and authentic. It is told as a flashback of events experienced by a young Englishman who was very adventurous and set to sail against his parents' wishes. Daniel Defoe's novel is strongly inspired by contemporary travel narratives and tales of real-life stories of a person or people who were cast adrift or ashore, like the Alexander Selkirk story. On Crusoe's travels, he is found shipwrecked at different times. One intriguing thing about him was that he never gave up on his quests. Instead, they somehow spurred him on to set sail again. This resolve to set out again one day puts him in danger. This dangerous journey to obtain the slaves stuck in Africa puts Crusoe in a precarious situation. After the shipwreck on an island after South America's coast, Crusoe is the only surviving human, apart from the dog and two cats who were the animal survivors. Although grateful to have survived, he rescues some provisions from the ship before it sunk completely. This was one thing that stood out for a lot of readers. How amidst the life-threatening event that just took place in his life, Crusoe was proactive about his survival at the moment. Unlike what most humans expected to do – brood, wallow in self-pity or give up entirely. For all that it is worth, this was an island that seemed lifeless with no infrastructure for human existence on there. All his survival instincts strengthened through previous voyages came to the fore on this island. Crusoe's journal almost seemed like a character on its own as he referred to it a lot. Not only did the journal serve as an escape for Robinson Crusoe, but it also was a mirror used by readers to understand him better and read his thoughts. This personal journal is

adapted into Crusoe's daily routine. He describes his daily activities, fears, concerns, challenges acquiring food, and his revival with Christianity. This journal was something to look forward to as a reader. Two years later, on the same island, Robinson Crusoe's life as a sole sojourner has metamorphosed into core beliefs no one thought possible. One would have imagined that by the strong sense of survival he exhibited, he will be coming up with discoveries that should be leading him closer to home. Instead, Crusoe was seen accepting his present state. He challenged the societal norms of the world he used to live in and the inherent vices compared to the peaceful island void of those vices. This was a novel that remains a classic to date. Thus, this new social stratum, distinct from both the aristocracy and the working class, played a vital role in shaping English society and culture.

6.7 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL

1. The Eighteenth-Century English novel's main characteristics are the relatable characters from different walks of life, different social strata, settings, and complexity of plots that illustrate how complex life in itself can be. They are usually centered around real-life issues.

2. Unlike the romance novels, the English novels of the 18th Century depicted a lot of reason, logical projection of thoughts, and facts. Whatever that propagated idealism was not welcomed or patronized.

   Just as the people began to question the societal norms, it became evident in their writing. Some novels seek to enlighten, others inform, a generous amount seems to entertain, and there were also those English novels which were a blend of them – just like 'infotainment.'

3. The English novels illustrated the rise of the middle class. Therefore, its theme, subject matter, style, characters, and setting took these into consideration. Unlike romance, the characters were not kings, queens, knights, or nobles. Instead, they are created using characters that are the typical everyday middle-class people of so many different professions. It was no wonder that readers found the strengths, weaknesses, and travails of these characters quite relatable.

   The setting and plot of novels also reflect this new focus of realism. The setting became the conventional realistic world we live in, rather than an imaginative kingdom or place. This was a magical aspect of the English novel - every reader at different times, in different places, experiencing a certain reality felt like they mattered. Their voice was being heard, and that they were not alone in their plight. This was how much the readers could see their own times and places in English novels.

   The middle class further experienced some power that was never experienced before. This was wielded by the power of the pen that was discovered at that time. Whatever that was put on paper was brought to light and could be easily tackled or did cower willingly out of their list of issues just because it was brought to the open. The latter was mostly the case.

4. Although the English novel tried to present its ideas logically, one thing that stood out for it was its choice of words and writing style. It was unique in its simplicity; nothing grandiose or exaggerated, just a play on words to better express one's logical reasoning regarding the topic in question.

6.8 LET'S SUM UP

The rise of realism in the 18th Century also affected the growth of the novel. Factors such as reason, intellect, and satirical spirit were all adopted into the novel form and were principal subjects

in the realist movement. All that we've mentioned earlier have culminated in the still relevant growth in the art of writing novels. Novels in our modern era have transcended from being just on paper to being digitized. Some authors even translate to other languages precisely so that the demand for them can be met. The English novel paved the way for individualization in a way nothing else would. One's ability to share a story now, in the language most common and widely accepted, English, means that it will be able to seep into the cultures that you never thought exist. A language that is unwavering in its constant evolution now embraces concepts that never existed years ago while still in the grasp of society's focus. Concepts like crypto currency, coding, etc., are now being adopted as books to shed more light on them. They are not novels quite alright, but the passed down individualism has given every person a voice that can be shared, a voice that can be used for the betterment of another and oneself. We have the English novel to thank for these strides, as it has grown to be one of the most popular art forms today, selling millions of copies in several countries across the world. None of these would have been possible if the founding fathers had not seized the time period — 18th Century — to create the English novel.

6.9 QUESTIONS

- What do you meant by the term "Novel"?
- What are the salient features of 18th Century?
- Who wrote *A Tale of a Tub*?
- Write a note the development of the novel in 18th Century.
- Write a note on the major themes of the 18th Century's novels.

6.10 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT-7

PRECURSORS OF ROMANTIC POETRY

Structure

7.0 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this unit are to:

- Provide a comprehensive view of the Romantic Movement, its beginnings, its sources of inspiration, its important features, its major figures and their contributions.
- Enable you to analyse, identify and appreciate Romantic poetry, and
- Make you realise the importance of the Romantic Movement in English literature as a significant and fruitful literary epoch.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Jacques Barzun remarks "Throughout the Eighteenth Century, all over Europe, signs appeared of new interests and new feelings about neglected elements in life and art. This is sometimes called Eighteenth- Century Romanticism or Pre-Romanticism". The Eighteenth Century is usually known as Classical Age, and the 'Age of Prose and Reason'. However, in the later part of 18th Century, we can see numerous cracks in the classical edifice through which seems to be peeping the multicolored light of romanticism. In the later years of this Century a large number of new influences were at work on English sensibility and temper. The change signalized a change in the ethos of poetry and, in fact, literature as a whole. The younger poets started breaking away from the "school" of Dryden and Pope, even though some poets, like Churchill and Dr. Johnson, still elected to remain in the old groove. There were very few poets, indeed, who set themselves

completely free from the old traditional influences. Most of them are, as it were, like Mr. Facing both ways, looking simultaneously at the neoclassical past and the romantic future. They seem to be 'Placed on this isthmus of a middle state.' Those Eighteenth- Century poets who show some elements associated with romanticism, while not altogether ignoring the old conventions, are called transitional poets or the precursors of the Romantic Revival.

7.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF PRE-ROMANTICS

Their poetry is not altogether intellectual in content and treatment. Passion, emotion, and the imagination are valued by them above the cold light of intellectuality. They naturally return to the lyric. They show a new appreciation of the world of Nature which the neoclassical poetry had mostly neglected. Their poetry is no longer "drawing-room poetry." They do not limit their attention to urban life and manners only, as Pope almost always did. They place more importance on the individual than on society. In them, therefore, is to be seen at work a stronger democratic spirit, a greater concern for the oppressed and the poor, and a greater emphasis on individualism in poetry, in society and everywhere. Their poetry became much more subjective. They show a much greater interest in the Middle Ages which Dryden and Pope had neglected on account on their alleged barbarousness. Lastly, there is a strong reaction against the heroic couplet as the only eligible verse unit. They make experiments with new measures and stanzaic forms. Thus, The Pre-Romantic Age, which paved the way for Romanticism, is characterized by a shift in focus from the rationalism and restraints of the Neo Classical Period to an emphasis on emotion, individualism and nature. It's key features include a greater appreciation for individual feelings, a fascinations with nature and the super natural and a move towards simple, more personal forms of expressions

7.3 PRE-ROMANTIC POETS

7.3.1 James Thomson (1700-48)

He is a typical transitional poet, though he chronologically belongs to the first half of the Eighteenth Century. Though he was contemporaneous with Pope yet he broke away from the traditions of his school to explore "fresh woods and pastures new. His Seasons (1726-30) is important for accurate and sympathetic descriptions of natural scenes. It is entirely different from such poems as Pope's Windsor Forest on account of the poet's first-hand knowledge of what he is describing and his intimate rapport with it.

7.3.2 Oliver Goldsmith (1728-74)

Goldsmith was as essentially a conservative in literary theory as Dr. Johnson of whose "Club" he was an eminent member. Both of his important poems, The Traveller (1764) and The Deserted Village (1770) are in heroic couplets. The first poem is, didactic (after Johnson's visual practice) and is concerned with the description and criticism of the places and people in Europe which Goldsmith had visited as a tramp. The second poem is rich in natural descriptions and is vibrant with a peculiar note of sentiment and melancholy which foreshadows Nineteenth- Century romantics. As in the first poem, Goldsmith exhibits the tenderness of his feelings for poor villagers.

7.3.3 Thomas Gray (1716-71)

Gray was one of the most learned men of the Europe of his day. He was also a genuine poet but his poetic production is lamentably small-just a few odes, some miscellaneous poems, and the Elegy. Though he was a classical scholar, his popular "Elegy Written in The Country Churchyard" is romantic because of its note of sadness and delicate imaginative spirit. "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" is Gray's finest poem which earned him the praise of even Johnson who condemned most of Gray's poetry. Thomas Gray's poem Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard is

a wonderful example of natural settings in transitional poetry. It "reflects on the lives of common, unknown, rustic men and women, in terms of both what their lives were and what they might have been". Gray is unafraid to see the poor, and emotionally illustrates how death affects their life: "For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn, / Or busy housewife ply her evening care: / No children run to lisp their sire's return…." Gray's next poems, *The Progress of Poesy* and *The Bard*, present a new conception of the poet not as a clever versifier but a genuinely inspired and prophetic genius. His last poems like *The Fatal Sisters* and *The Descent of Odin* are romantic fragments with which we step out of the Eighteenth Century and find ourselves in the full stream of romanticism.

7.3.4 William Collins (1721-59)

Collin's work is as thin in bulk as Gray's. It does not extend too much more than 1500 lines. He combines in himself the neoclassic and romantic elements, though he is not without a specific manner which is all his own. On the one hand, he provides numerous examples of poetic diction at its worst, and, on the other, he delights in the highly romantic world of shadows and the supernatural. His Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands foreshadows the world in which Coleridge delighted. He is chiefly known for his odes. To Liberty and the one mentioned above are the lengthiest of Collins' odes, but he is at his best in shorter flights. He is exquisite when he eschews poetic diction without losing his delightful singing quality. Referring to Collins, Swinburne maintains that "in purity of music" and "clarity of style" there is "no parallel in English verse from the death of Marvell to the birth of William Blake."

7.3.5 William Cowper (1731-1800)

In his satires he imitated the manner of Pope, but his greatest poem The Task is all his own. It is written in blank verse and contains the famous line: "God made the country and men made the town" which indicates his love of Nature and simplicity. However, the classical element in him is more predominant than the romantic. Compton-Rickett maintains: "We shall find in his work neither the passion nor the strangeness of the Romantic School. Much in his nature disposed to shape him as a poet of Classicism, and with occasional reserves he is far more of a classical poet than a romantic."

7.3.6 George Crabbe (1754-1832)

He mostly continued the neoclassic tradition and was derisively dubbed as "a Pope in worsted stockings." In his poetry, which is mostly descriptive of the miseries of poor villagers, he was an uncompromising unromantic realist. He asserted: "I paint the cot as truth will paint it black, and as bards will not". He showed much concern for villagers, but he left for Wordsworth to glorify their simplicity and, even, penury. Crabbe's excessive, boldness as a realist alienates him from the polish of the neoclassic school. However, he tenaciously adhered to the heroic couplet, even when he was a contemporary of Blake and the romantic poets.

7.3.7 Robert Burns (1759-95)

He was a Scottish peasant who took to poetry and became the truly national poet of Scotland. His work Poems Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect (1786) skyrocketed him to fame. All these poems are imbued with the spirit of romantic lyricism in its untutored spontaneity, humour, pathos and sympathy with nature and her lowly creatures including the sons of the soil. A critic observes: "Burns was a real peasant who drove the plough as he hummed his songs, and who knew all the wretchedness and joys and sorrows of the countryman's life. Sincerity and passion are the chief keys of his verse. Burns can utter a piercing lyric cry as in "A Fond Kiss" and then we Sever, can be gracefully sentimental as in My love is like a red, red rose, can be coarsely witty as in The

Jolly Beggars, but he is always sincere and passionate, and that is why his words go straight into the heart."

7.3.8 William Blake (1757-1827)

Blake was an out and out rebel against all the social, political, and literary conventions of the Eighteenth Century. The most undisciplined and the loneliest of all poets, he lived in his own world peopled by phantoms and specters whom he treated as more real than the humdrum realities of the physical world. His glorification of childhood and feeling for nature make him akin to the romantic poets. He is best known for his three thin volumes Poetical Sketches (1783), Songs of Innocence (1789), and Songs of Experience (1794), which contain some of the most orient gems of English lyricism. A critic observes: "His passion for freedom was, also, akin to that which moved Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey in their earlier years, though in its later form, it came nearer to Shelley's revolt against convention."

7.4 LET'S SUM UP

We can say that towards the end of the Neo-classical period, opposition to Pope's School of Poetry was more or less steadily growing. The writers' interest in Nature and in the romantic past marked this opposition. Dr. Johnson's forceful personality held the new tendencies in check for the time, but signs of the change became more and more pronounced as the Century advanced to its close. In the last quarter of the Century, four poets, each, in his own way, heralded the opening of the second romantic age in English literature. These were Cowper, Crabbe, Blake and Burns.

7.5 QUESTIONS

1. What is Romanticism?
2. Who were the Precursors of Romanticism?
3. Thomas Gray is known for?
4. Write a short note of Thomas Gray.
5. What do you know about William Blake?

7.6 SUGGESTED READINGS

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UNIT-8

ROMANTICISM AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Structure

8.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit will enable students:

- To understand the Romantic age
- To understand Romantic Poets
- To understand French Revolution, its cause and impact
- To understand the major themes of the Romantic Poetry.

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Romanticism originated in the second half of the 18th Century at the same time as the French_Revolution. Romanticism continued to grow in reaction to the effects of the social transformation caused by the Revolution. There are many signs of these effects of the French Revolution in various pieces of Romantic literature. By examining the influence of the French Revolution, one can determine that Romanticism arose as a reaction to the French Revolution. Instead of searching for rules governing nature and human beings, the romantics searched for a direct communication with nature and treated humans as unique individuals not subject to scientific rules.

Throughout history certain philosophies or ideas have helped to shape the themes of literature, art, religion, and politics. The concept of Romanticism was preceded by the philosophy of Neoclassicism. In the writings before this period humans were viewed as being limited and imperfect. A sense of reverence for order, reason, and rules were focused upon. There was distrust for innovation and invention. Society was encouraged to view itself as a group with generic characteristics. The idea of individualism was looked upon with disfavor. People were encouraged through literature, art, religion, and politics to follow the traditional rules of the Church and Government. However, by the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries a great reaction against this

philosophy was noted. It was labeled as Romanticism. The expression Romantic gained currency during its own time, roughly 1780-1850. However, even within its own period of existence, few Romantics would have agreed on a general meaning. Perhaps this tells us something. To speak of a Romantic era is to identify a period in which certain ideas and attitudes arose, gained currency and in most areas of intellectual endeavor, became dominant. That is, they became the dominant mode of expression which tells us something else about the Romantics: expression was perhaps everything to them - expression in art, music, poetry, drama, literature and philosophy. Just the same, older ideas did not simply wither away. Romantic ideas arose both as implicit and explicit criticisms of 18th Century Enlightenment thought. For the most part, these ideas were generated by a sense of inadequacy with the dominant ideals of the Enlightenment and of the society that produced them. Thus, Romanticism was an artistic, literary, and intellectual movement that originated in Europe toward the end of the 18th Century and in most areas was at its peak in the approximate period from 1800 to 1850. Partly a reaction to the Industrial Revolution, it was also a revolt against the aristocratic social and political norms of the Age of Enlightenment and a reaction against the scientific rationalization of nature. It was embodied most strongly in the visual arts, music, and literature, but had a major impact on historiography, education and the natural sciences. Its effect on politics was considerable and complex; while for much of the peak Romantic Period it was associated with liberalism and radicalism, its long-term effect on the growth of nationalism was probably more significant. The movement validated intense emotion as an authentic source of aesthetic experience, placing new emphasis on such emotions as apprehension, horror and terror, and awe—especially that which is experienced in confronting the sublimity of untamed nature and its picturesque qualities: both 5 new aesthetic categories. It elevated folk art and ancient custom to a noble status, made spontaneity a desirable characteristic (as in the musical impromptu), and argued for a natural epistemology of human activities, as conditioned by nature in the form of language and customary usage. Romanticism reached beyond the rational and Classicist ideal models to raise a revived Medievalism and elements of art and narrative perceived to be authentically medieval in an attempt to escape the confines of population growth, urban sprawl, and industrialism. Romanticism embraced the exotic, the unfamiliar, and the distant, harnessing the power of the imagination to envision and to escape.

The French Revolution, along with the Industrial Revolution, has probably done more than any other revolution to shape the Modern World. Not only did it transform Europe politically, but also, thanks to Europe's industries and overseas empires, the French Revolution's ideas of liberalism and nationalism have permeated nearly every revolution across the globe since 1945. In addition to the intense human suffering as described above, its origins have deep historic and geographic roots, providing the need, means, and justification for building the absolute monarchy of the Bourbon Dynasty which eventually helped trigger the revolution. The need for absolute monarchy came partly from France’s continental position in the midst of hostile powers. The Hundred Years War (1337-1453) and then the series of wars with the Hapsburg powers to the South, East, and North (c.1500-1659) provided a powerful impetus to build a strong centralized state. Likewise, the French Wars of Religion (1562-98) underscored the need for a strong monarchy to safeguard the public peace. The means for building a monarchy largely came from the rise of towns and a rich middle class. They provided French Kings with the funds to maintain professional armies and bureaucracies that could establish tighter control over France. Justification for absolute monarchy was based on the Medieval custom of anointing new kings with oil to signify God’s favour. This was the basis for the doctrine of Divine Right of Kings. In the late 1600’s, all these factors contributed to the rise of absolutism in France. Louis XIV (1643-1715) is especially associated with the absolute monarchy, and he did make France the most emulated and feared state in Europe, but at a price. Louis’ wars and extravagant court at Versailles bled France white and left

it heavily in debt. Louis' successors, Louis XV (171574) and Louis XVI (1774-89), were weak disinterested rulers who merely added to France's problems through their neglect. Their reigns saw rising corruption and three ruinously expensive wars that plunged France further into debt and ruined its reputation. Along with debt, the monarchy's weakened condition led to two other problems: the spread of revolutionary ideas and the resurgence of the power of the nobles. Although the French Kings were supposedly absolute rulers, they rarely had the will to censor the philosophes' new ideas on liberty and democracy. Besides, in the spirit of the Enlightenment, they were supposedly "enlightened despots" who should tolerate, if not actually believe, the philosophes ideas. As a result, the ideas of Voltaire, Rousseau, and Montesquieu on liberty and democracy spread through educated society. Second, France saw a resurgence of the power of the nobles who still held the top offices and were trying to revive and expand old feudal privileges. By this time most French peasants were free and as many as 30% owned their own land, but they still owed such feudal dues and services as the corvee (forced labour on local roads and bridges) and captaineries (the right of nobles to hunt in the peasants' fields, regardless of the damage they did to the crops). Naturally, these infuriated the peasants. The middle class likewise resented their inferior social position, but were also jealous of the nobles and eagerly bought noble titles from the king who was always in need of quick cash. This diverted money from the business sector to much less productive pursuits and contributed to economic stagnation. 24 Besides the Royal debt, France also had economic problems emanating from two main sources. First of all, while the French middle class was sinking its money into empty noble titles, the English middle class was investing in new business and technology. For example, by the French Revolution, England had 200 waterframes, an advanced kind of waterwheel. France, with three times the population of England, had only eight. The result was the Industrial Revolution in England, which flooded French markets with cheap British goods, causing business failures and unemployment in France. Second, a combination of the unfair tax load on the peasants (which stifled initiative to produce more), outdated agricultural techniques, and bad weather led to a series of famines and food shortages in the 1780's. All these factors (intellectual dissent, an outdated and unjust feudal social order, and a stagnant economy) created growing dissent and reached a breaking point in 1789. It was then that Louis XVI called the Estates General for the first time since 1614. What he wanted was more taxes. What he got was revolution.

8.2 THE INFLUENCE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

The French Revolution played a huge role in influencing Romantic writers. As the Revolution began to play out, the absolute monarchy that had ruled France for centuries collapsed in only three years. This resulted in a complete transformation of society. A majority of the population was greatly in favor of this as the working class had been suffering oppression for many years. According to Albert Hancock in his book *The French Revolution and the English Poets: A Study in Historical Criticism*, "The French Revolution came, bringing with it the promise of a brighter day, the promise of regenerated man and regenerated earth. It was hailed with joy and acclamation by the oppressed, by the ardent lovers of humanity, by the poets, whose task it is to voice the human spirit." It was a period of radical social and political upheaval in late 1700s. France, had a profound and lasting influence on France and the world. It ended the French monarchy, established a republic and introduced ideals like liberty, equality and fraternity.

A common theme among some of the most widely known romantic poets is their acceptance and approval of the French Revolution. William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lord Byron, and Percy Shelley all shared the same view of the French Revolution as it being the beginning of a change in the current ways of society and helping to improve the lives of the oppressed. As the French Revolution changed the lives of virtually everyone in the nation and even

continent because of its drastic and immediate shift in social reformation, it greatly influenced many writers at the time. Hancock writes, "There is no need to recount here in detail how the French Revolution, at the close of the last Century, was the great stimulus to the intellectual and emotional life of the civilized world, how it began by inspiring all liberty-loving men with hope and joy."

Literature began to take a new turn when the spirit of the revolution caught the entire nation and turned things in a whole new direction. The newly acquired freedom of the common people did not only bring about just laws and living but ordinary people also had the freedom to think for themselves, and in turn the freedom to express themselves. Triggered by the revolutionary spirit, the writers of the time were full of creative ideas and were waiting for a chance to unleash them. Under the new laws writers and artists were given a considerable amount of freedom to express themselves which did well to pave the way to set a high standard for literature.

Prior to the French Revolution, poems and literature were typically written about and to aristocrats and clergy, and rarely for or about the working man. However, when the roles of society began to shift resulting from the French Revolution, and with the emergence of Romantic writers, this changed. Romantic poets such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, and Shelley started to write works for and about the working man; pieces that the common man could relate to. According to Christensen, "To get the real animating principle of the Romantic Movement, one must not study it inductively or abstractly; one must look at it historically. It must be put beside the literary standards of the Eighteenth Century. These standards impose limits upon the Elysian fields of poetry; poetry must be confined to the common experience of average men… The Romantic Movement then means the revolt of a group of contemporary poets who wrote, not according to common and doctrinaire standards, but as they individually pleased… there are no principles comprehensive and common to all except those of individualism and revolt."

8.3 A CLOSER LOOK AT THE INFLUENCE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION ON SELECTED ROMANTIC POETS

Although the poets mentioned earlier (Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, and Shelley) all share the common theme of approving the French Revolution, they each have their own unique ideas regarding the Revolution itself that have greatly shaped their works. This can be seen by analyzing some of each of their works.

8.3.1 Shelley

Ever since he was young, Percy Bysshe Shelley was very non-traditional. He was born a freethinker and "in spite of all his lovable and generous traits he was a born disturber of the public peace". At school he was known as "Mad Shelley, the Atheist". According to Hancock, "The Goddess of Revolution rocked his cradle."

Throughout his life Shelley's opposition toward religion grew less violent; however, he never professed a belief in immortality or religion of any sort. His poems declare a belief in the permanence of things that are true and beautiful. Common themes that Shelley incorporated into his works include the hatred of kings, faith in the natural goodness of man, the belief in the corruption of present society, the power of reason, the rights of natural impulse, the desire for a revolution, and liberty, equality and fraternity. These are all clearly shaped by the French Revolution.

8.3.2 Byron

While Shelley had faith that was founded upon modern ideas, Byron had faith in nothing. He stood for only destruction. Because of this he was not a true revolutionist and was rather "the

arch-apostle of revolt, of rebellion against constituted authority." This statement is easily defended as Byron admitted that he resisted authority but offered no substitute. This is supported by what Byron once wrote, "I deny nothing… but I doubt everything." He then said later in life, "I have simplified politics into an utter detestation of all existing governments." Byron believed neither in democracy nor in equality, but opposed all forms of tyranny and all attempts of rulers to control man.

In Byron's poetry, he incorporated deep feeling, rather than deep thinking, to make his characters strong. Often, Byron portrayed his characters as being in complete harmony with nature, causing the character to lose him in the immensity of the world. The French Revolution played a huge role in shaping Byron's beliefs and opposition to monarchy.

8.3.3 Wordsworth

While Shelley and Byron both proved to support the revolution to the end, both Wordsworth and Coleridge joined the aristocrats in fighting it. Wordsworth however is the Romantic poet who has most profoundly felt and expressed the connection of the soul with nature. He saw great value in the immediate contact with nature. The French Revolution helped to humanize Wordsworth as his works transitioned from extremely natural experiences to face the realities and ills of life, including society and the Revolution. From then, his focus became the interests of man rather than the power and innocence of nature.

8.3.4 Coleridge

Samuel Taylor Coleridge was also profoundly affected by the French Revolution. Unlike Wordsworth, Coleridge was more open and receptive to the social and political world around him. He was a very versatile man and he led a life that covered many fields and his work displayed this. He was a poet of nature, romance, and the Revolution. He was a philosopher, a historian, and a political figure.[4] The French Revolution played a great role in shaping Coleridge into each of these things.

According to Albert Hancock, Coleridge tended to focus his life on two things. The first, being to separate himself from the surrounding world and to submerge himself in thought, as a poet. The second, to play a role in the world's affairs, as a philosopher, historian, and politician.

8.4 LET'S SUM UP

To sum up we can say that during the second half of the 18th Century economic and social changes took place in England. The country went through the so-called Industrial Revolution when new industries sprang up and new processes were applied to the manufacture of traditional products. During the reign of King George III (1760-1820) the face of England changed. The factories were built, the industrial development was marked by an increase in the export of finished cloth rather than of raw material, coal and iron industries developed. Internal communications were largely funded. The population increased from 7 million to 14 million people. Much money was invested in road- and canal-building. The first railway line which was launched in 1830 from Liverpool to Manchester allowed many people inspired by poets of Romanticism to discover the beauty of their own country. Just as we understand the tremendous energizing influence of Puritanism in the matter of English liberty by remembering that the common people had begun to read, and that their book was the Bible, so we may understand this age of popular government by remembering that the chief subject of romantic literature was the essential nobleness of common men and the value of the individual. As we read now that brief portion of history which lies between the Declaration of Independence (1776) and the English Reform Bill of 1832, we are in the presence of such mighty political upheavals that "the age of revolution" is the only name by which

we can adequately characterize it. Its great historic movements become intelligible only when we read what was written in this period; for the French Revolution and the American Commonwealth, as well as the establishment of a true democracy in England by the Reform Bill, were the inevitable results of ideas which literature had blowout rapidly through the civilized world. Liberty is fundamentally an ideal; and that ideal—beautiful, inspiring, compelling—was kept steadily before men's minds by a multitude of books and pamphlets as far apart as Burn's Poems and Thomas Paine's Rights of Man—all read eagerly by the common people, all proclaiming the dignity of common life, and all uttering the same passionate cry against every form of class or caste oppression. First the dream, the ideal in some human soul; then the written word which proclaims it, and impresses other minds with its truth and beauty; then the united and determined effort of men to make the dream a reality—that seems to be a fair estimate of the part that literature plays in the political progress of a country. Romanticism was the greatest literary movement in the period between 1770 -1840. It meant the shift of sensibility in art and literature and was based on interdependence of Man and Nature. It was a style in European art, literature and music that emphasized the importance of feeling, emotion and imagination rather than reason or thought. The Romantic Period of literature came into being in direct reaction against a variety of ideas and historical happenings taking place in England and Europe at that time. These happenings include the Napoleonic Wars and their following painful economic downfalls; the union with Ireland: the political movement known as Chartism, which helped to improve social recognition and conditions of the lower classes: the passage of the Reform Bill which suppressed slavery in the British Colonies, curbed monopolies, lessened poverty, liberalized marriage laws, and expanded educational facilities for the lower classes, it both accepted and despised the current philosophy of utilitarianism, a view in which the usefulness of everything, including the individual was based on how beneficial it was to Society. Finally, the most important factor to impact a change in both thought and literature was that of the Industrial Revolution. The Industrial Revolution brought about vast changes in English society. It helped to create both great fortunes and great hardship. Within a short time England went from being a country of small villages with independent craftsmen to a country of huge factories run by sweat shops full of men, women, and children who lived in overcrowded and dangerous city slums. An industrial England was being born in pain and suffering.

8.5 QUESTIONS

- Write a note on the contribution of Wordsworth towards the Romantic Poetry.
- What are the major themes discussed in the Romantic poetry?
- Discuss Wordsworth's language and diction.
- Who wrote *Biographia Literaria*?
- What is an Ode?

8.6 SUGGESTED READINGS

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9. Kathirkamu, Dr. A. M, “The Social History of England Since the Renaissance”, Chennai, New Century Book House, 2014.

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UNIT-9

GROWTH OF ROMANTIC LITERATURE (PROSE, POETRY, DRAMA AND FICTION)

Structure

9.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit the learners will be able to:

- Understand the development of the romantic literature

- Understand different forms of literature, viz., prose, poetry, drama and fiction
- Understand how the Romantic age was different from preceding age
- Understand how the romantic literary genres deviate from strict rules of the preceding age

9.1 INTRODUCTION

The Romantic period in English Literature is generally considered to have begun from 1785 and ended in 1830. Some literary historians locate the beginning in 1789, the year of the French Revolution. The French Revolution had affected not only the political and social destiny of France, but exerted a far reaching profound influence in shaping the destiny of the whole continent. Pre-Romanticism is the term for a number of connected phenomena that began in the middle of the 18th Century and predated Romanticism proper. One of these was a renewed interest in Medieval romance, which is where the term "Romantic Movement" originates. The romance was a story or ballad of chivalric adventure that strongly emphasized individual heroism as well as the exotic and the mysterious, in contrast to the elegant formality and artificiality of the dominant Classical forms of literature, such as the French Neoclassical Tragedy or the English Heroic Couplet in poetry. This new interest in relatively unsophisticated but overtly emotional literary expressions of the past was to be a dominant note in Romanticism. Romanticism in English literature began in the 1790s with the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) of William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Wordsworth defined poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" in his "Preface" to the Second Edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), which served as the credo for the English Romantic Poetry Movement. The third major poet of the movement's early stages in England was William Blake. A focus on the mystical, the subconscious, and the supernatural, as well as changes in literary form and subject, characterized the initial phase of the Romantic Movement in Germany. This initial phase encompasses a multitude of talents, such as Friedrich Hölderlin, the early Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Jean Paul, Novalis, Ludwig Tieck, August Wilhelm and Friedrich von Schlegel, Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, and Friedrich Schelling. Because of their significant historical and theoretical publications, François-Auguste-René, vicomte de Chateaubriand, and Madame de Staël were the main founders of Romanticism in Revolutionary France.

The collection and imitation of indigenous folklore, folk ballads and poetry, folk dance and music, and even previously disregarded Medieval and Renaissance works attest to the acceleration of cultural nationalism and a renewed focus on national origins that characterised the Second Phase of Romanticism, which spanned roughly 1805 to the 1830s. Sir Walter Scott, who is frequently credited with creating the historical novel, transformed the resurgent appreciation of history into creative literature. Around this time, the writings of John Keats, Lord Byron, and Percy Bysshe Shelley represented the pinnacle of English Romantic poetry.

Works addressing the supernatural, the strange, and the terrible - such as those by Charles Robert Maturin, the Marquis de Sade, and E.T.A. Hoffmann - were a noteworthy consequence of the Romantic interest in the emotive. Joseph von Görres, Joseph von Eichendorff, Clemens Brentano, and Achim von Arnim led Germany's Second Wave of Romanticism. Romanticism had expanded to include nearly all of Europe's literature by the 1820s. In this later, second phase, the movement took a less universal stance and focused more on analyzing the passions and struggles of remarkable people as well as the historical and cultural legacies of each country. In England, Thomas De Quincey, William Hazlitt, Charlotte, Emily, and Anne Brontë; in France, Victor Hugo, Alfred de Vigny, Alphonse de Lamartine, Alfred de Musset, Stendhal, Prosper Mérimée, Alexandre Dumas, and Théophile Gautier; in Italy, Alessandro Manzoni and Giacomo Leopardi; in Russia,

Aleksandr Pushkin and Mikhail Lermontov; in Spain, José de Espronceda and Ángel de Saavedra; in Poland, Adam Mickiewicz; and nearly every significant writer in pre-Civil War America.

The Second Renaissance is another name for the Romantic Movement. It was a revival as well as a revolution. Walter Pater asserts that the adding of strangeness to beauty is what gives art its romantic aspect. Curiosity and a love of beauty are the fundamental components of the romantic temperament. One of the most significant events in English literary history was the Romantic Movement. It was quite varied. It was everywhere. Every literary genre flourished, including poetry, prose, drama, novels, criticism, and fiction. It was a fantastic time in English literary history.

9.2 ROMANTICISM IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

Around the close of the 18th Century, a literary, artistic, and intellectual movement known as Romanticism emerged throughout Europe. The publication of William Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads in 1798 is considered to represent the start of the Romantic era, while Queen Victoria's coronation in 1837 is considered to be its conclusion. In other English-speaking nations, like America, romanticism came later.

Due to the rapid growth of overcrowded industrial cities and the depopulation of the countryside, which occurred roughly between 1798 and 1832, the Romantic era in England saw significant social transformation. Two factors contributed to the mass migration of people in England: the Industrial Revolution, which gave them jobs "in the factories and mills, operated by machines driven by steam-power," and the Agricultural Revolution, which involved the enclosure of the land and forced workers off the land. Romanticism was a revolt against the scientific rationality of nature and against the aristocratic social and political conventions of the Age of Enlightenment, but it can also be regarded as a reaction to the Industrial Revolution. Many people's political thought at this time was particularly influenced by the French Revolution.

9.3 SALIENT FEATURES OF THE ENGLISH ROMANTICISM

English Romanticism aims to create a closely connected but separate kind of symbolic engagement with the regions of conflict that were brought about by the above-described modernisation process, much like the literary era of Victorianism. The conflict between autonomous literary or cultural productions and the dominant social reality is the main characteristic of aesthetic modernism in its larger, currently evolving sense. Literary culture no longer views itself as a manifestation of the prevailing ideology and social class, but rather as its primary opponent or basic substitute. Individuality and equality are therefore very successfully transformed into poetic objects or principles of expression in romantic English poetry, with the distinction that poetic individualism is specifically recognized as a poetic form of design or subject matter rather than as an abstract economic world-view. The English Romantics were so deeply linked to nature and landscape that they particularly saw London, the city, as the pinnacle of perceptual ruin and alienation.

The rationalisation principle exhibits a similarly stark dichotomy, as seen in the 18th-Century poetry such as James Thomson's *The Seasons* and Isaac Newton's Mechanical World Explanation. However, English romantics do not have access to the secret inner spiritual life, and physics and causation are simply insufficient sources of knowledge. According to this perspective, imaginative penetration and understanding of the individual, and consequently of the particular and the contrarian, can only be achieved via the use of creative imagination and symbolic vision.

Examining both the past and the future reveals the English Romanticists' lack of thematic consistency. This openness is typified by the romantic liking for the past, the exotic, and the primitive, as well as the simultaneous interest in the landscape, attitudes and experiences of the lone meditating subject. A defining feature of English romantic poetry is the desire, in a sense, to address such identity crises by contrasting the unpleasant realities of an increasingly industrialized and urbanized world with imaginative counter-designs that harmoniously shape the relationship between man and nature.

Despite these tensions, the tremendous impact of English romanticism and its leading authors—Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley, or Byron—showcases the emergence of a completely new literature that simultaneously takes a revolutionary and anti-revolutionary attitude. The romantics' imaginative ability, as a synthesis and reintegration of contemporary disintegration, undoubtedly offers opportunities for restitution and occasionally even utopian sense horizons. However, it also represents the logic of the differentiating process characteristic of modernism by highlighting the poetic's artistic autonomy and otherness.

In recent literary-scientific debates, the old question of the appropriateness or usefulness of a specific epochal term for English romanticism is taken up again in part. For a cultural-scientific or discourse-oriented approach, which is not limited to the high literature or even the lyrical terms such as romanticism or romantic age are hardly applicable, insofar as they are topics or discourses, for example on the women's question, slavery, capitalism, political economy or hide the evolution of the sciences.

Literary history of English Romanticism is in many ways the result of a development that began at the beginning of the 18th Century. Unlike in France, where neoclassicism, on the basis of an absolutist or authoritarian political order, formed a very rigid, dogmatic set of rules that finally collapsed abruptly, beautiful literature in England was much more versatile, open and flexible. Thus, in Enlightenment English neoclassicism, literary forms strive to express emotions and sentiments relatively early, and set the natural, the spontaneous and the primitive against the "boring" and "superficial" elegance of courtly culture. These literary innovations, which ultimately merge in English Romanticism, include in particular the sentimental epistolary novel by Samuel Richardson and his epigones, the horror novel, the night and death poetry by Edward Young (The Complaint, or, Night Thoughts on Life, Death and Immortality, 1742-45) as well as the nature seal and the Folk ballad. Throughout, these literary works seek an emotional language that is intended to overcome rhetorical schemes, classical phrases, or stereotyped language patterns in order to authentically express people and situations.

The sensitive self-representations and observations of nature of the lyric ego in pre-romantic poetry, however, cannot be completely detached from stereotypes and general linguistic phrases or ways of seeing. The actual subjective dissolution of language takes place only in Romanticism, in which poets adopt the classical concept of the fixed give up the order and the insertion of the individual into the universally recognized as valid hierarchical culture.

Instead, romantic selfishness seeks to find the source of order and happiness in one's own imagination and one's own feeling. The romantic poetic individuality does not aim at the bourgeois liberty-seeking individual and does not strive for the realization of a natural law guaranteed suffrage. Liberation from the feudal gangs remains too abstract and mechanical to the overwhelming majority of English romantics; they see the special and the human of the individual in their very own human soul. According to the romantic view, it is therefore the meaning of natural existence to follow one's own individuality and one's own soul. Characteristically, this poetic individuality for the English romanticists is realized primarily in a meditative, harmonious

relationship with nature, not characterized by the constraints of the everyday world of action or the dictates of reason, especially in a situation of solitary nature encounter. According to this self-image, romantic literature or art is the natural expression of the soul of the artist.

The great example of this romantic individualism is Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose work breaks with extraordinary self-confidence with the tradition of the rule poetics. Thus, in Wordsworth's self-portrayal, *The Prelude* (1805/1850) or Byron's *Childe Herold's Pilgrimage* (1812/1816/1818) the poet's ego as the authentic source of truth is noticed. Accordingly, the romantic theorists hardly distinguish between the person of the poet and his poetry as a work. The focus of poetic interest shifts from the imitation of ancient patterns to imaginative self-expression. The shift in the focus from the rhetorically calculated formal design of the work to the person of the poet should serve to connect people in order to oppose the looming professionalisation and fragmentation of culture.

In the poems of Wordsworth, too, the lyric ego finds its perfect happiness in the agreement of self and nature in socially remote solitude. In the banal everydayness of natural beauty, the soul or the imagination of the poet discovers a realm of eternity and infinity. The perception of nature in the creative imagination of the poet serves self-healing and refers to how the individual first attains his true humanity as a poetic one. The lyrical ego finds its own in a language that avoids conventional language formulas and brings everyday phrases or circumstances into a poetically effective context through metaphorical transmissions, reunions, repetitions, and rhythmic flow.

Religious ideas and feelings are also transferred from romantic poets to the world of nature and literature. In the mystic-salvific history of unity with God and nature, the separation of God and nature and the restoration of the original unity, the poet's imagination creates reconciliation; in Romantic thought the poet therefore plays a prominent role as a bard and prophet. Scientific naturalism and the nature reified by mathematics and mechanistic thinking thus become a mythicized naturalism or naturalized myth opposed. For example, Coleridge plays off creative vitality against mechanistic philosophy and emphasizes the harmony of man and nature in a metaphysical background.

This romantic religion of nature is based on various sources: In addition to the reflections of Montaigne on the savages comes here a primitivist stream of thought to bear, which was reinforced in the 18th Century by experiencing permissive South Seas cultures and the idea of the superiority of the primitive nature over the civilized culture. Accordingly, the vast, limitless nature, the seething sea or the Alps to be romantic topoi par excellence, which, however, only with the aesthetics of the sublime (sublime the will) presentation and enjoyment capable.

The force of the imagination, which is essential alongside poetic individualism and the cult of nature, provides the foundations of the romantic counter-movement to the processes of rationalization of modern modernization. Imagination represses the rationality of the Enlightenment in the hierarchy of human faculties: it does not simply imitate the world mimically, but rather means a mode of perception that, in the process of perception and creative imagination, transforms or redesigns the image of the external world into an inner vision. This visionary element is so pronounced, especially in Blake, that the imagination effects a mythologically designed spiritualization of nature, in which God after the Fall is now omnipresent in the human imagination.

9.4 ROMANTIC POETRY

The Romantic Age was the golden age of poetry. It was rich with the sonorous voices of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats Byron, Tennyson, Arnold and the Pre-Raphaelites, and enlivened by the ominous and jubilant tones of Browning. These poets used subjective,

autobiographical materials which marked a new trend towards the expression of a lyrical and personal experience of life. They were less intellectual and more emotional presenting a variety of emotional states of the soul. The transitional poetry marks the beginning of a reaction against the rational, intellectual, formal, artificial and unromantic poetry of the age of Pope and Johnson. It was marked by a strong reaction against stereotyped rules. The transitional poets derived inspiration from Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton. Unlike the Augustan poetry, it is poetry of countryside, of common and ordinary people, and not of the fashionable, aristocratic society and town life. Love of nature and human life characterise this poetry. Poetry from this era frequently focuses on the physical world; the Romantics, and particularly Wordsworth, are frequently referred to as "nature poets," although their "nature poems" have broader themes as they frequently reflect on "an emotional problem or personal crisis."

9.4.1 William Blake (1757 – 1827)

The poet, painter, and printmaker William Blake was an early writer of this kind. Largely disconnected from the major streams of the literature of the time, Blake was generally unrecognised during his lifetime, but is now considered a seminal figure in the history of both the poetry and visual arts of the Romantic Age. William Blake was a nonconformist who associated with some of the leading radical thinkers of his day, such as Thomas Paine and Mary Wollstonecraft. In defiance of 18th- Century Neoclassical conventions, he privileged imagination over reason in the creation of both his poetry and images, asserting that ideal forms should be constructed not from observations of nature but from inner visions. He declared in one poem, "I must create a system or be enslaved by another man's". Considered mad by contemporaries for his idiosyncratic views, Blake is held in high regard by later critics for his expressiveness and creativity, and for the philosophical and mystical undercurrents within his work. Among his most important works are: *Songs of Innocence* (1789) and *Songs of Experience* (1794) "and profound and difficult 'prophecies' " such as *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (1793), *The First Book of Urizen* (1794), *Milton* (1804–11), and *"Jerusalem: the Emanation of the Giant Albion"* (1804–20).

After Blake, among the earliest Romantics were the Lake Poets, a small group of friends, including William Wordsworth (1770–1850), Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834), Robert Southey (1774–1843) and journalist Thomas de Quincey (1785–1859).

9.4.2 Walter Scott (1771 – 1832)

Born in Edinburgh, Scotland, influential novelist, poet, historian, and biographer Sir Walter Scott studied law as an apprentice to his father before his writing career flourished. At the age of 25, he published his first work, *The Chase, and William and Helen* (1796), a translation of two Romantic ballads by the German balladeer G.A. Burger. In 1799, he was appointed sheriff depute of the county of Selkirk, and he held this position for the rest of his life. In 1806, he was appointed clerk to the Court of Session in Edinburgh. Scott became an instant best seller with historical narrative poems like *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), followed by *The Lady of the Lake* (1810), *Rokeby* (1813), and *The Lord of the Isles* (1815). He also wrote immensely successful historical novels. *Waverley*, which he published anonymously in 1814, is now considered the first historical novel in Western literature. This story revolves around the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745. Scott's many other novels include *Ivanhoe* (1819), *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818), *Rob Roy* (1817), *The Antiquary* (1816), and *Guy Mannering* (1815).

9.4.3 William Wordsworth (1770 – 1850)

William Wordsworth brought a completely new approach to the writing of English poetry. His objections to an over-stylised poetic diction, his attitude to nature, his choice of simple

incidents and humble people as the subjects of his poetry – these well-known characteristics of his, are all but, minor aspects of his revolutionary achievements. No, earlier English poet, had held such a view, nor in spite of Wordsworth's undoubted influence on later poetry, any subsequent poet, has held it in its purity. Thus, Wordsworth is unique in the history of English poetry. He supported the French Revolution in its early phase but his liberalism gradually dwindled. In addition to many lyrics, Wordsworth wrote *The Prelude* (1850), a sort of spiritual autobiography like its subtitle *The Growth of a Poet's Mind,* indicates. As the title suggests ''the Prelude'' is the first of a three-part poem *The Recluse*. The second part titled ''The Excursion'' was published in 1814, but the third part was never written. Wordsworth is better known for his short poems like "Tintern Abbey" and "Immortality Ode" than for his long and ambitious works. "Tintern Abbey" recounts three stages in the development of the poet's love of nature; (1) sensuous animal passion, (2) moral influence, and (3) mystical communion. "Michael" deals with the sturdiness of character and nature's healing power. The five "Lucy Poems" are also popular. In "Ode on Intimations of Immortality", Wordsworth attributes a child's wisdom and glory to the unconscious memory of a previous life. "Resolution and Independence" is yet another memorable poem. Wordsworth influenced modern thinking on the natural goodness of childhood, the moral value of simple living and the inspiring and healing powers of nature. Wordsworth seems to have attempted to translate into action, both in his life and in his work principle: "Simple living and high thinking". Wordsworth's personality and poetry were deeply influenced by his love of nature, especially of the sights and scenes of the Lake District, where he spent the mature part of his life. A profoundly, original and sincere thinker, Wordsworth displayed a high seriousness comparable, at times, to Milton's but tempered with tenderness and love of simplicity. Wordsworth with Coleridge wrote the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), where they sought to use the language of ordinary people in poetry; it includes Wordsworth's poem "Tintern Abbey". The work introduced Romanticism into England and became a manifesto for Romantic poets. In 1800, the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* was published, which included the critical essay outlining Wordsworth's poetic principles. In its *Preface,* Wordsworth describes poetry as the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." Thus, Wordsworth views Nature as a source of love, perpetual joy, soothing power, knowledge and spirituality. Nature and God become one for him. He believes that Nature is the Universal Spirit guiding anyone who likes to be guided by Her.

9.4.4 S.T. Coleridge (1772 – 1834)

Active in the wake of the French Revolution as a dissenting pamphleteer and lay preacher, he inspired a brilliant generation of writers and attracted the patronage of progressive men of the rising middle class. As a William Wordsworth's collaborator and constant companion in the formative period of their careers as poets, Coleridge participated in the sea change in English verse associated with *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). Of the two sorts of poetry based on the theme, Coleridge agreed to choose the supernatural and Wordsworth the ordinary. Accordingly, Coleridge wrote "The Ancient Mariner" and Wordsworth wrote many of his poems for the "Lyrical Ballads.'' However, serious differences developed between the two on important questions. Coleridge did not agree with many parts of the "Preface". He objected to them as he considered them "erroneous". Some of Wordsworth's statements appeared to contradict "other parts of the same preface and the author's own practice in the greater number of the poems themselves". One such question was the difference between the language of poetry and that of prose. Wordsworth thought that there was no essential difference between the two. Coleridge thought they were different. He argued that metre is essential for poetry which implies passion. More than the other Romantics, he recognised the supremacy of imagination as a creative power. *Biographia Literaria* (1817) is a seminal work dealing with his philosophy of poetry and a critical statement of Romantic ideas. It is in this book that he explains how he had dealt with the supernatural in his poetry. He attempted to give "a

semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith". According to Coleridge "A poem is that species of composition which is opposed to works of science by proposing for its immediate object pleasure not truth." For him a poem contains the same elements as a prose composition because both using the words. The difference between a poem and a prose composition cannot then lay in the medium for each employs the same medium i.e. words. Coleridge believes that rhyme and meter are essential in order to memorize what is written and to develop a certain kind of attachment to it by getting the feeling of the words through a particular rhyme or rhythm.

The early Romantic Poets brought a new emotionalism and introspection, and their emergence is marked by the first romantic manifesto in English literature, the "Preface" to Lyrical Ballads (1798). In it Wordsworth discusses what he sees as the elements of a new type of poetry, one based on the "real language of men", and which avoids the poetic diction of much 18th-Century poetry.

9.5 THE SECOND GENERATION

The second generation of Romantic poets were marked by a shift towards exploration and a larger emphasis in imagination. The second generation of Romantic poets includes Lord Byron (1788–1824), Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822) and John Keats (1795–1821). These men are famous for their poetry, and just as famous for all dying before the age of forty: Keats at 25, Shelley at 30, and Lord Byron at 36. Although Byron was typically left out, the second generation writers were generally characterised as the "Cockney School" for being associated with Leigh Hunt, having much more liberal ideas, and reforming the poetic style even further. They produced immense numbers of intellectual works before their early deaths. The works of the second generation often took interest in Gothic and Medieval art, and nature. During this time, the ballad was reintroduced and popularised.

9.5.1 Lord Byron (1788 – 1824)

Byron's reputation as a poet and as a personality outside his own country was immense. He had influenced several French and German poets. His life itself was like a romantic poem and he is the hero of his poems. The phrase ''Byronic hero" has become an independent and critical term to describe a youthful, daring, passionate, cynical, moody and rebellious figure. Byron, however, was still influenced by 18th- Century satirists and was, perhaps the least 'romantic' of the three, preferring "the brilliant wit of Pope to what he called the 'wrong poetical system' of his Romantic contemporaries". Byron achieved enormous fame and influence throughout Europe with works exploiting the violence and drama of their exotic and historical settings. Goethe called Byron "undoubtedly the greatest genius of our Century". A trip to Europe resulted in the first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812), a mock-heroic epic of a young man's adventures in Europe, but also a sharp satire against London society. The poem contains elements thought to be autobiographical, as Byron generated some of the storyline from experience gained during his travels between 1809 and 1811. However, despite the success of *Childe Harold* and other works, Byron was forced to leave England for good in 1816 and seek asylum on the Continent, because, among other things, of his alleged incestuous affair with his half-sister Augusta Leigh. Here he joined Percy Bysshe and Mary Shelley, with his secretary John William Polidori on the shores of Lake Geneva, during the 'year without a summer'. Polidori's *The Vampyre* was published in 1819, creating the literary vampire genre. This short story was inspired by the life of Lord Byron and his poem *The Giaour* (1813). Between 1819 and 1824 Byron published his unfinished epic satire *Don Juan*, which, though initially condemned by the critics, "was much admired by Goethe who translated part of it". Thus, as a romantic poet, he explored the themes of individualism, passions,

melancholy and conflict between ideal aspirations and the stark realities of life, often drawing inspirations from his own experiences and emotions.

9.5.2 P.B. Shelley (1792 – 1822)

Shelley was of that second generation of Romantic poets that did not live to be old and respectable. Shelley, in many respects was a Romantic poet par excellence. His strange, and brief life with its eccentric unworldliness, his moods of ecstasy and labour, his swooning idealism, combined to produce a popular image of Romanticism. Shelley's life continued to be dominated by his desire of a political and social reform, and he was constantly publishing pamphlets. Shelley is perhaps best known for poems such as *Ozymandias*, *Ode to the West Wind*, *To a Skylark*, *Music*, *When Soft Voices Die*, *The Cloud*, *The Masque of Anarchy* and *Adonais,* an elegy written on the death of Keats. Shelley's early profession of atheism, in the tract "The Necessity of Atheism", led to his expulsion from Oxford, and branded him as a radical agitator and thinker, setting an early pattern of marginalisation and ostracism from the intellectual and political circles of his time. Similarly, Shelley's 1851 essay "A Defense of Poetry" displayed a radical view of poetry, in which the poet acts as "the unacknowledged legislators of the world," because, of all of artists, they best perceive the undergirding structure of society. His close circle of admirers, however, included the most progressive thinkers of the day, including his future father-in-law, philosopher William Godwin. A work like *Queen Mab* (1813) reveal Shelley, "as the direct heir to the French and British revolutionary intellectuals of the 1790s. Shelley became an idol of the next three or four generations of poets, including important Victorian and Pre-Raphaelite poets such as Robert Browning, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, as well as later W. B. Yeats. Shelley's influential poem *The Masque of Anarchy* (1819) calls for nonviolence in protest and political action. It is perhaps the first modern statement of the principle of nonviolent protest. Mahatma Gandhi's passive resistance was influenced and inspired by Shelley's verse, and Gandhi would often quote the poem to vast audiences. Shelley's platonic ideas find expression in the "Defence". He says that the poet reveals the phenomenal World to mankind. The word, 'poet' as used by Shelley, includes all artists and even philosophers. The artist is a superior being. Art improves imagination and so it is useful. Shelley asserts in the "Defence": "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the World". His lyric poems are superb in their beauty, grandeur and mastery of language. Although Matthew Arnold labeled him an "ineffectual angel", 20th Century critics have taken Shelley seriously, recognising his wit, his gifts as a satirist, and his influence as a social and political thinker. Thus, as a poet, he exemplified many key Romantic themes, including a love for nature, rebellion against authority, and a focus on individual experience and emotion. Shelley's poetry often explored themes of social gesture, political freedom and the power of the imagination, solidifying his place within the Romantic Movement.

9.5.3 John Keats (1795 - 1821)

John Keats is perhaps the greatest of the second generation Romantic poets who blossomed early and died young. Indeed one of the most striking things about Keats is the independence with which he worked out his poetic destiny, the austere devotion with which he undertook his own artistic training. Wordsworth and Coleridge were both interested in philosophy which deflected their attention; Blake's didactic intention coloured much of his work; Byron moved away from poetry to active participation in the liberation of Greece and Shelley's poetry and political beliefs were closely linked. But Keats strove hard throughout his brief career to achieve the essence of poetry. Though John Keats shared Byron and Shelley's radical politics, "his best poetry is not political", but is especially noted for its sensuous music and imagery, along with a concern with material beauty and the transience of life. Among his most famous works are: "The Eve of St Agnes", "Ode to Psyche", "La Belle Dame Sans Merci", "Ode to a Nightingale", "Ode on a Grecian

Urn", "Ode on Melancholy", "To Autumn" and the incomplete Hyperion, a 'philosophical' poem in blank verse, which was "conceived on the model of Milton's Paradise Lost ". Keats' letters "are among the finest in English" and important "for their discussion of his aesthetic ideas", including 'negative capability' ". Keats has always been regarded as a major Romantic, "and his stature as a poet has grown steadily through all changes of fashion". Thus, Keats' works are characterized by its focus on intense emotions, its exploration of human condition and its engagement with classical mythology and art

9.6 OTHER POETS

Besides above mentioned poets there were several other poets during the same period who could rise to prominence but their literary genius is not so well reformed in comparison to the great architects of the period. Another important poet in this period was John Clare (1793–1864). Clare was the son of a farm labourer, who came to be known for his celebratory representations of the English countryside and his lamentation for the changes taking place in rural England. His poetry underwent a major re-evaluation in the late 20th Century and he is often now considered to be among the most important 19th- Century poets. His biographer Jonathan Bate states that Clare was "the greatest labouring-class poet that England has ever produced. No one has ever written more powerfully of nature, of a rural childhood, and of the alienated and unstable self".

George Crabbe (1754–1832) was an English poet who, during the Romantic period, wrote "closely observed, realistic portraits of rural life in the heroic couplets of the Augustan Age". Lord Byron who was an admirer of Crabbe's poetry, described him as "nature's sternest painter, yet the best". Modern critic Frank Whitehead has said that "Crabbe, in his verse tales in particular, is an important–indeed, a major–poet whose work has been and still is seriously undervalued." Crabbe's works include *The Village* (1783), *Poems* (1807), *The Borough* (1810), and his poetry collections *Tales* (1812) and *Tales of the Hall* (1819).

9.7 WOMEN POETS

Romanticism is often seen as rather a 'male' literary movement because many of the poems and plays describe experiences that weren't available to women (or lower-class men) in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries. Wealthy men gallivanted off to Europe on their Grand Tours and stood at the summit of Mont Blanc and wrote poems about the sublime while women stayed at home and learnt about manners and homemaking.

Even if women did share these experiences with men, like Dorothy Wordsworth in the Lake District with her brother, William Wordsworth, they weren't encouraged to find their own voice and write about their own experiences. For example, Dorothy and William shared an experience viewing daffodils in Grasmere, which William suggested was a solitary experience, and Dorothy wrote about it in her diary (in an incredibly poetic way) and William wrote a poem for public consumption. Nowadays, scholars consider Dorothy's work to be on par with (or even better than) William's but she wasn't encouraged to be a poet by her brother.

Women writers were increasingly active in all genres throughout the 18th Century, and by the 1790s women's poetry was flourishing. Notable poets later in the period include Anna Laetitia Barbauld, Joanna Baillie, Susanna Blamire and Hannah More. Other women poets include Mary Alcock (c.1742-1798) and Mary Robinson (1758-1800) both of whom "highlighted the enormous discrepancy between life for the rich and the poor", and Felicia Hemans (1793-1835) author of nineteen individual books during her lifetime, and who continued to republished widely after her death in 1835.

More interest has been shown in recent years in Dorothy Wordsworth (1771-1855), William Wordsworth's sister, who "was modest about her writing abilities, she produced poems of her own; and her journals and travel narratives certainly provided inspiration for her brother."

In the past decades there has been substantial scholarly and critical work done on women poets of this period, both by make them available in print or online, and second, to assess them and position them within the literary tradition.

9.8 THE ROMANTIC NOVEL

The Romantic Age in English literature was essentially an age of poetry but the temperament of time was also suitable for the growth of the novels. The novelists of the Romantic age exhibited same tendencies in their works which were evident in the poetry of the age. These novelists were great story tellers. They portrayed the realistic social life as well as wrote some exquisite historical romances. Though different types of prose was written during the romantic period, yet the novel showed the most remarkable development. This was largely due to the works of Scott-who used the novel of manners, which he inherited from Fielding and Smollett, to project into the field of historical romance, the immemorial struggle between conscience and self-will, Providence and Fate. The scientific discoveries and inventions were plundering the faith of people on God and religion. The result appeared spreading doubts and despair in the mind of the common people. To, the literary community it was opportune to do something to restore old beliefs and values. Harsh societal realities of the time also demanded an escapism heal for the people. Circumstances clubbed together gave rise to a soothing, sublime literature viz. Romantic age literature, of which Novel was a component.

9.8.1 Sir Walter Scott (1771 – 1832)

Walter Scott was the greatest novelists of the Romantic Movement of the early Nineteenth Century. He was both a poet and a novelist. He wrote verse for more than ten years and then shifted to writing novels. He was a prolific writer and has written twenty seven novels. Walter Scott's qualities as a novelist were vastly different from those of Jane Austen. Whereas she painted domestic miniatures, Scott depicted pageantry of history on broader canvases. Jane Austen is precise and exact in whatever she writes; Scott is diffusive and digressive. The novel *Waverley*, was issued anonymously in 1814. Owing chiefly to its ponderous and lifeless beginning, the book hung fire for a space; but the remarkable remainder was almost bound to make it a success. After *Waverley* Scott went on from strength to strength: *Guy Mannering* (1815), *The Antiquary* (1816), *The Black Dwarf* (1816), *Old Mortality* (1816), Rob Roy (1818), *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818), *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819), and *A Legend of Montrose* (1819). All these novels deal with scenes in Scotland, but not all with historical Scotland. They are not of equal merit, and the weakest is *The Black Dwarf*. Scott now turned his gaze abroad, producing *Ivanhoe* (1820), the scene of which is Plantagenet England; then turned again to Scotland and suffered failure with *The Monastery* (1820), though he triumphantly rehabilitated himself with *The Abbot* (1820), a sequel to the last. Henceforth he ranged abroad or stayed at home as he fancied in *Kenilworth* (1821), *The Pirate* (1822), *The Fortunes of Nigel* (1822), *Peveril of the Peak* (1823), *Quentin Durward* (1823), *St. Ronan's Well* (1824), *Redgauntlet* (1824), *The Betrothed* (1825), *The Talisman* (1825), *Woodstock* (1826), *The Fair Maid of Perth* (1828), *Anne of Geierstein* (1829), *Count Robert of Paris* (1832), and *Castle Dangerous* (1832). The last works were dictated from the depths of mental and bodily anguish, and the furrows of mind and brow are all over them. Yet frequently the old spirit revives and the ancient glory is renewed. Besides these he has given us a number of imperishable portraits of the creatures of his imagination. He is a superb master of the dialogue which is invariably true to character. The novels of Scott betray the same imaginative joy in the

recreation of the past as his poetry, but the novel offered him a more adaptable and wider field than the narrative poem. Thus, Sir Walter Scott is widely regarded as the "Father of the Historical Novel" for his influential works that blend fictional narratives with historical events, creating engaging and accessible stories for his contemporaries and subsequent generations.

9.8.2 John Galt (1779 – 1839)

Galt has been called the first political novelist in the English language, due to being the first novelist to deal with issues of the Industrial Revolution. He was born in Ayrshire, and there he passed the early years of his life, afterward moved to Greenock. After spending some years as a clerk, he moved to London to read for the Bar, but he abandoned his studies to take up a business appointment abroad. After much travelling he settled in Scotland, and produced a large amount of literary work. The best of his novels are *The Ayrshire Legatees*; or, the *Pringle Family* (1821), in the form of a letter-series, containing much amusing Scottish narrative; *The Annals of the Parish* (1821), his masterpiece, which is the record of a fictitious country minister, doing in prose very much what Crabbe had done in verse; *The Provost* (1822); and *The Entail*; or, the *Lairds of Grippy* (1823).

9.8.3 Thomas Love Peacock (1785 – 1866)

Peacock is best known for his essay *The Four Ages of Poetry* (1820), which provoked Shelley's famous *Defence of Poetry*. Apart from his essays, Peacock wrote several other works such as *Recollections of Childhood: The Abbey House* (1837), *Memories of Shelley* (1858-62) and novels such as *Headlong Hall* (1816), *Melincourt* (1817), *Nightmare Abbey* (1818), *Maid Marian* (1822), *The Misfortunes of Elphin* (1829) and *Gryll Grange* (1860). 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.

9.8.4 Frederick Marryat (1792 – 1848)

Marryat followed the Smollett tradition of writing sea-stories. He was born in London, entered the Navy at an early age (1806), and saw some fighting during the Napoleonic Wars. He saw further service in different parts of the world, rose to be a captain, and spent much of his later life writing the novels that have given him his place in literature. His earliest novel was *The Naval Officer; or Scenes and Adventures in the Life of Frank Mildmay* (1829), a loose and disconnected narrative, which was followed by *The King's Own* (1830), a much more able piece of work. From this point he continued to produce fiction at a great rate. The best of his stories are *Jacob Faithful* (1834), *Peter Simple* (1834), *Japhet in Search of a Father* (1836), *Mr. Midshipman Easy* (1836), and *Masterman Ready* (1841-42). All his best books deal with the sea, and have much of its breeziness.

9.8.5 Mary Shelley (1797–1851)

She is remembered as the author of *Frankenstein* (1818). The plot of this is said to have come from a waking dream she had, in the company of Percy Shelley, Lord Byron, and John Polidori, following a conversation about galvanism and the feasibility of returning a corpse or assembled body parts to life, and on the experiments of the 18th- Century natural philosopher and poet Erasmus Darwin, who was said to have animated dead matter. Sitting around a log fire at Byron's villa, the company also amused themselves by reading German ghost stories, prompting Byron to suggest they each write their own supernatural tale.

9.8.6 Jane Austen (1775-1817)

Austen did for the English novel precisely what the Lake poets did for English poetry. She refined and simplified it, making it a true reflection of English life. As Wordsworth made a deliberate effort to make poetry natural and truthful, Jane Austen also from the time she started writing her first novel - *Pride and Prejudice*, had in her mind the idea of presenting English country society exactly as it was, in opposition to the romantic extravagance of Mrs. Radcliffe and her school. Like the Lake poets, she met with scanty encouragement in her own generation. Jane Austen brought good sense and balance to the English novel which during the Romantic Age had become too emotional and undisciplined. Jane Austen's works critique the novels of sensibility of the second half of the 18th Century and are part of the transition to 19th- Century realism. Her plots, though fundamentally comic, highlight the dependence of women on marriage to secure social standing and economic security. Austen brings to light the hardships women faced, who usually did not inherit money, could not work and where their only chance in life depended on the man they married. She reveals not only the difficulties women faced in her day, but also what was expected of men and of the careers they had to follow. This she does with wit and humour and with endings where all characters, good or bad, receive exactly what they deserve. Her work brought her little personal fame and only a few positive reviews during her lifetime, but the publication in 1869 of her nephew's A Memoir of Jane Austen introduced her to a wider public, and by the 1940s she had become accepted as a major writer. The second half of the 20th Century saw a proliferation of Austen scholarship and the emergence of a Janeite fan culture.

Her first novel was *First Impressions* which later came to known as *Pride and Prejudice*, written in 1796-97 and published in 1813. It is a novel of manners, it follows the character development of Elizabeth Bennet, the protagonist of the book, who learns about the repercussions of hasty judgments and comes to appreciate the difference between superficial goodness and actual goodness.

Her second novel was *Elinor and Marianne*, which was later known as *Sense and Sensibility*, written in 1797-98 and published in1811, and it followed the same general lines as its predecessor. It was written in epistolary form (novel written in the form of letters). It tells the story of the Dashwood sisters, Elinor (age 19) and Marianne (age 16½) as they come of age.

Sense and Sensibility was followed by *Northanger Abbey*, written in 1798 and published posthumously in 1818. It is somewhat a parody of the Gothic novel. The book begins as a burlesque of the Radcliffian horror novel, which was then all the rage.

Then came *Mansfield Park* which was written between 1811 and 1813, though published in 1814. The novel did not receive any public reviews until 1821. The novel tells the story of Fanny Price, starting when her overburdened family sends her at the age of ten to live in the household of her wealthy aunt and uncle and following her development into early adulthood.

Mansfield Park was followed by *Emma*, probably written in 1815 and published in 1816. It is set in the fictional country village of Highbury and the surrounding estates of Hartfield, Randalls and Donwell Abbey, and involves the relationships among people from a small number of families. The novel was first published in December 1815, although the title page is dated 1816. As in her other novels, Austen explores the concerns and difficulties of genteel women living in Georgian-Regency England. Emma is a comedy of manners.

Then there appeared *Persuasion* written between1815-16 and published in 1818. The story revolves around Anne Elliot, an Englishwoman of 27 years, whose family moves to lower their expenses and reduce their debt by renting their home to an admiral and his wife.

Her other works include: *Lady Susan* 1871, an epistolary novella, *The Wastons* 1804 and *Sandition* 1871, unfinished fictions, *Sir Charles Grandison* 1793, an adapted play, *Plan of Novel* 1815, Poems 1796-1897, Prayers 1796-1817 and Letters 1796-1817.

As a novelist Jane Austen worked in a narrow field. She was the daughter of a humble clergyman living in a little village. Except for short visits to neighbouring places, she lived a static life but she had such a keen power of observation that the simple country people became the characters of her novels. But in spite of these limitations she has achieved wonderful perfection in that narrow field on account of her acute power of observation, her fine impartiality and self-detachment, and her quiet, delicate and ironical humour. Her circumstances helped her to give that finish and delicacy to her work, which have made them artistically prefect. Though in her day she did not receive the appreciation she deserved, posterity has given her reward by placing this modest, unassuming woman who died in her forties, as one of the greatest of English novelists. Her characters are developed with minuteness and accuracy. They are ordinary people, but are convincingly alive. She is fond of introducing clergymen, all of whom strike the reader as being exactly like clergymen, though each has his own individual characteristics. She has many characters of the first class, like the servile Mr. Collins in Pride and Prejudice, the garrulous Miss Bates in Emma, and the selfish and vulgar John Thorpe in Northanger Abbey. Thus, her use of social commentary, realism, wit and irony have earned her acclaim amongst critics and scholars. Her plots often explore the dependence of women on marriage for the pursuit of favourable social standing and economic security.

9.9 THE ROMANTIC DRAMA

Romantic poets attempted to revitalise poetic drama, though with limited stage success. Byron, Keats and Shelley all wrote for the stage, but with little success in England, with Shelley's *The Cenci* perhaps the best work produced, though that was not played in a public theatre in England until a Century after his death. Byron's plays, along with dramatizations of his poems and Scott's novels, were much more popular in the Continent, and especially in France, and through these versions several were turned into operas, many still performed today. If contemporary poets had little success on the stage, the period was a legendary one for performances of Shakespeare, and went some way to restoring his original texts and removing the Augustan "improvements" to them. The greatest actor of the period, Edmund Kean, restored the tragic ending to King Lear; Coleridge said that, "Seeing him act was like reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning." The English poets, among them Lord Byron, John Keats, and Percy Bysshe Shelley, failed in their attempts to create a drama that suited prevailing tastes, partly because they were not prepared to descend to a level that they considered vulgar and partly because they were overshadowed by the weight of England's dramatic heritage, having very little to add to it. Romanticism, though it had achieved much in the field of poetry and prose had failed miserably in drama. Of course, the dramatic activity was not absent even the great poets Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley essayed the drama. Lamb, the master of prose attempted one drama. But the greater parts of this drama are either not literary or mere literary exercises which were not in the fullest sense stage plays. Romanticism tailed to bring out any dramatic talent. The poets were mainly subjective and lyrical. They had the richness and charm of the Elizabethan playwright, no doubt, but they lacked the necessary equipment of the successful dramatist, namely the power of creating character alien to their own humour and mastery of the stagecraft. In the drama, spirit of Romanticism had entered no doubt, but it looked alien in the theatrical tradition that prevailed in the age. Stage drama in the last decade of the previous Century had ceased to be literature. The masterpieces of the great masters like Goldsmith and Sheridan were still fresh and were acted. But no new standard in the drama was erected by the professional playwrights. Their plays were mainly imitations or caricatures of the comedy of

Moliere and Congreve. Mannerisms, cheap sentiment and pun became habitual. The dramatic style is a mixture of rhetoric and slang with none of the brilliance of the prose of Sheridan's plays. Comedy thus degenerated into farce. The most notable of such dramatists were George Colman and Thomas Holcroft. Their stock-in-trade is "nothing but gentlemen in distress and hard landlords, and generous interferers, and fathers who got a deal of money and sons who spent it", as Leigh Hunt has summed it. The attack of the press was severe. Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound" (1820) exemplifies the Romantic closet drama. Byron's "Manfred" (1817) is another key example, exploring themes of guilt, defiance, and the supernatural.

9.10 LET'S SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed the growth of Romantic literature and different genres related to it. Several writers tried their hands on different forms of literature and they produced a new kind of prose, poetry, drama and fiction. Romantic Movement came to the fore at the end of the 18th Century as a powerful blow to the Neo-Classicism and Industrial Revolution. People from every corner of society began to see nature as primary source of knowledge and existence. In the second half of the 18th Century the writers began to breaks the restrictions of the Neo-classical age, and began to seek wholeheartedly a new freedom of expression. The spirit of romanticism, the fancy and imagination, the savage enthusiasm of rural life, all were getting preference over the dry intellectualism of the 18th Century. The Romantic Age introduced significant literary trends that reshaped the landscape of English literature. Central to this period was the emphasis on emotion and individual experience, contrasting sharply with the rationality of the Enlightenment. Romantic literature often explored the sublime and the mystical, celebrating nature as a source of inspiration and spiritual renewal.

9.11 QUESTIONS

- Discuss the development of drama in the Romantic age.
- Discuss the growth and development of Poetry in the Romantic age.
- Write a note on the salient feature of the romantic poetry.
- Discuss the major poets of the Romantic age.

9.12 FURTHER READINGS

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BLOCK-III INTRODUCTION

In this block learners will be acquainted with a new age in literature, i.e., the Victorian Age. The Victorian Age in English Literature was a time of profound literary, cultural, and social change. During this time, the novel emerged as a prominent literary genre that addressed issues of industrialization, class conflict, and evolving moral standards while also reflecting the complexity of the time. Because the steam printing press made text production much cheaper and railroads made texts distribution quick and easy. The Victorian Age was a time when new genres appealed to newly mass audiences. This is the main way that The Victorian literature differs from that of the eighteenth century and the Romantic period. During the Victorian era, poetry was one of the most widely read genres. The Romantic poets were highly regarded and frequently cited, especially William Wordsworth, who lived through the start of the era and passed away in 1850. The Victorians experimented with narrative poetry, which uses verse to tell an audience a story. The dramatic monologue, a novel form created by Victorian poets, involves a speaker reciting the poem's content to an audience inside the poem. This block is divided into three units as follows:

Unit–10 deals with the growth and characteristics of the Victorian Literature. It further explores how the new forms of literature were introduced and what was the cause of the growing popularity of the novel. Some key points are also there on the Victorian Compromise and how Tennyson had dealt with that. The novel, which addressed a variety of topics pertaining to social issues, industrialization, and the evolving roles of men and women, became the most popular literary form during this time due to rising literacy and the growth of the publishing industry.

Unit–11 provides a comprehensive introduction to Pre-Raphaelite Poetry, its cause of emergence, the Pre-Raphaelite Movement, Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, expansion of the Movement with international influences, poets and their works and the salient features of Pre- Raphaelite Poetry. The literary movement known as Pre-Raphaelite Poetry, which flourished in the Victorian England, was closely linked to the visual arts, especially the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood of painters. It arose as a response to the alleged artificiality and moralizing inclinations of the Victorian literature at the time, calling for a return to sincerity, beauty, and meticulous naturalism. The movement, which frequently explored symbolism, sensuality, and tragic romance, was inspired by romanticism, medieval themes, and an emphasis on art for its own sake.

Unit–12 encapsulates a detailed analysis of the term "Naughty Nineties". It explores its historical and cultural context, key features of the Naughty Nineties Literature with notable writers and their major works. In English literature, the 1890s are referred to as the "Naughty Nineties" because they were a time of social and cultural transformation in both Britain and the US, characterized in particular by a revolt against the rigid Victorian moral standards of the day. Hedonism, an emphasis on personal experience, and a challenge to conventional values were all prevalent during this time, and these trends were mirrored in literature, art, and social conduct.

UNIT-10

GROWTH AND CHARACTERISCRTICS OF THE VICTORIAN LITERATURE

Structure

10.0 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this unit are to:

- Provide learners a brief background of the Victorian Age.
- Make learners Understand the social, political and cultural impact of the Victorian Age.
- Analyse various features of the Victorian Age apart from its beginning.
- Make learners understand the growth and main characteristics of the Victorian Literature.

10.1 INTRODUCTION

In its strictest sense, the Victorian Age or the Age of Tennyson covers the period from 1832 to 1887. Queen Victoria reigned from 1837 to 1901 but literary movements rarely coincide with the exact time period of a royal accession or death. By the second half of the 19th Century, the Romantic Movement had exhausted itself, and with the reign of Queen Victoria there began a new golden age in the literary history of England. The sixty years covered by Tennyson's working life were rich in literature of almost every kind. They were years of rapid change, stimulating thought and provoking criticism. The growth of wealth gave increased leisure for the pursuit of letters, and widened the audience to whom a man of letters could appeal.

10.2 THE VICTORIAN AGE

The Victorian Age was a period of transition or change. Changes were noticed in every sphere of life in England. Society was changing itself so quickly that its best men of letters made a sincere search for balance between the old and the new values of life and faith. Victorian age is a term used to designate broadly the literature written during the reign of a Queen Victoria (1837-1901). According to Dickens, "the Victorian Age was the best as well as the worst period, the spring as well as the winter season of England." It was an age of material prosperity, political awakening, democratic and social reforms, educational progress, industrial and mechanical progress, scientific advancement and social unrest. The age produced a galaxy of great personages

in all fields of life. It has its beauties as well as defects. Whereas Macaulay trumpeted the progress achieved by Victorian Age, Ruskin, Carlyle, Lytton and Trollope who raised frowns of disapproval against the soul-killing materialism of the age. Carlyle voiced its deep-seated vulgarity, Symonds its signs of 'world fatigue', Dickens exposed its hollowness as also the plight of the poor. The Victorian Age in English literature, though commonly associated with the reign of Queen Victoria, who came to the throne in 1837, does not exactly cover the period of that august Queen's reign. This designation, however, is particularly given because of the importance of the age of Queen Victoria and its effect on the literature of the time. The Victorian Age has a specific significance in the history of England, as it was an era of peace and growth on all fronts. The Victorian Period is found to mark the advancement of the English people in political expansion, scientific knowledge and also in materialistic pursuits and progress. The echoes of the French Revolution were heard no more, and the country stood firmly on a solid faith in monarchical authority. The Queen enjoyed immense position and popularity and no thought of political upheaval could be at all imagined even. It was a period when the 'war drum homes." The few colonial wars that broke out during this period left little adverse effect on the national life, though the Crimean War, undoubtedly, caused a stir in England, but its effects were soon forgotten. Therefore, by and large, the Victorian Age was a period of peace and prosperity. In such a peaceful atmosphere, there was material advancement and industrial progress. The industrial revolution transformed the agrarian economy of the nation into an industrial economy. Mills and factories were installed at important centres, and the whole of England came to be hummed with the battle of looms and the boom of weaving machines. Industrial progress caused social and economic distress among the masses. The industrial revolution that made the capitalists roll in wealth and riches, brought in its wake only semi-starvation and poverty to the class of labourers and factory workers who were totally discontented with their miserable lot. There was no equal distribution of national wealth. According to Hopkins, "England has grown hugely wealthy but this wealth has not reached the working classes; I expect it has made their conditions worse."

Victorian Age, was an age of rapid social changes and reforms. Class distinctions were increasing at an alarming rate. The Reform Act of 1832, had dethroned the landed aristocracy, transferring the power to farmers and shop-keepers. But in spite of reforms, the condition of the workers and labourers did not change speedily, but rather, the quality of life only declined. During the Victorian Period, two schools of thought existed in religion – the school of rationalism, the inheritors of the deistic spirit of the Eighteenth Century, and, the Catholic reaction, grounded on faith and mystic apprehension of reality. At the dawn of the Nineteenth Century, it was obvious that it would be an age of the victory of reason. The ministers of religion could not help being influenced by the new spirit. The church seemed fast asleep: the sheep looked up hungry and were not fed. Shelley and Owen attacked religion in their writings, and whereas, the established religion appeared to stand on that solid foundation, the reaction against started. Many circumstances assisted the Catholic Movement. Romanticism only strengthened this Catholic Movement. Novelists like Scott helped it, while the revival of Gothic architecture fed it. According to Newman Scott's novels revealed in him a Catholic frame of mind. George Borrow, the champion of Protestantism maintained that Scott had revived Laudism and Popery. According to George Borrow, the Oxford Movement originated in the novels of Waverley. The Catholic reaction was an integral part of the Romantic Revival. Both of them believed in a mystery surrounding human life which was inexplicable, The object behind the Oxford Movement was to revive people's faith in God and religion.

The rich and complex texture of the Victorian literature also contains the strands of romanticism, along with naturalism. Romanticism had not died in the Victorian Age, though, it had certainly lost the creative force of Wordsworth and Keats. The radiance of romanticism could still

be perceived by the Victorians all around them. It was the spirit of romanticism that influenced the innermost consciousness of Tennyson, Thackeray, Browning and Arnold. Even the adversaries of romanticism seemed to be influenced by it. Carlyle denounced romanticism in a style that is charged with emotional fire. English literature of the later half of the Nineteenth Century has striking similarity with the literature of the romantic revival. However, with romanticism is allied the Renaissance of idealism in Victorian Age. It is extremely fertile in artistic expression. Carlyle's idealism is nothing but the romantic mysticism.

As a matter of fact, Victorian Literature is many-sided and complex, and reflects both romantically and realistically the great changes that were going on in life and thought. The religious and philosophical doubts and hopes raised by the new science the social problems arising from the new industrial conditions; the conscious resort of literary men to foreign sources of inspiration; the rise of a new middle-class audience and new media of publication (the Magazines) are among the forces which coloured literature during the Victoria's reign. Since there are marked differences between the literature written in the early years of the Victoria's reign and that written in the later years, we treat the early years as a part of the romantic period and the later years as a part of the realistic period. The period between the death of Sir Walter Scott and 1870 was a time of the gradual lessening of the Romantic impulse and the steady growth of Realism in English letters. It bears to romanticism much the same relation that the Age of Johnson bears to the Neo-Classic Period. It is an age in which the seeds of the new movement were being sown but which was still predominantly of the old. In poetry, the voices of the major romantics had been stilled by death, of Wordsworth, and a new poetry more keenly aware of social issues and more marked by doubts and uncertainties resulting from the pains of the Industrial Revolution and the advances in scientific thought appeared. The chief writers of this kind of poetry were Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, and the young Swinburne. In the essay Carlyle, Newman, Ruskin, Arnold, and De Quincey did outstanding work.

The period between 1870 and the death of Queen Victoria saw the full flowering of the movement towards realism which had started as early as the 1830's but which had been subordinated to the dominant romanticism of the first half of the Victoria's reign. George Eliot and Thomas Hardy carried the realistic novel to new heights. Spencer, Huxley, Newman, Arnold and Morris, in the essay, argued the meaning of the new science, the new religion and the new society. The drama, which had been sleeping for more than a Century, awoke under the impact of the Ibsen and the Celtic renaissance, Stevenson, W.H. Hudson, and Kipling revived romantic fiction. Oscar Wilde and the 'decadents' wrote witty poetry and drama, Walter Pater advanced the doctrine of "Art for Art's Sake". The tendency to look with critical eyes on man, society and God; to ask pragmatic questions, and to seek utilitarian answers-a tendency which had begun in the second quarter of the Century had become the dominant mode of thought and of writing by the time. Besides the revolution in the technique of production, brought forth by the invention of the steam engine, there was another significant revolution in scientific thoughts as a result of Darwin's great theory of the Evolution of the Species. That was something shocking for the age, but it firmly laid the foundation of rational enquiries and scientific culture in the human world.

10.3 GROWTH OF THE VICTORIAN LITERATURE

After the romantic revival, the literature of the Victorian Age entered in a new period. The Literature of this period express the fusion of romanticism to realism. The Victorian Age is rich in literature. It produced two great poets like Tennyson and Browning; dramatists like Shaw and Galsworthy; novelists like Charles Dickens and Hardy; and essayist like Carlyle and Stevenson. The age is remarkable for the excellence of its literature. The Victorian era represents one of the

most significant periods in the development of English literature. This extraordinary age of literary production emerged from a complex interplay of social, technological, and intellectual forces that transformed both the creation and consumption of written works. The age saw not only a remarkable increase in the volume of published material but also significant innovations in literary forms, themes, and techniques that continue to resonate in contemporary literature. The Victorian literary landscape was extraordinarily diverse, embracing everything from realistic social novels addressing and expressing contemporary issues to fantasy works exploring mythic realms, from intricately crafted poetry grappling with religious doubt to sensational stories designed for mass entertainment.

The dramatic expansion of the reading public represents one of the most significant factors underlying the growth of Victorian literature. At the beginning of the Nineteenth Century, literacy had been largely confined to the aristocracy and upper middle classes, but educational reforms throughout the Victorian Period gradually extended basic literacy to an ever-widening segment of the population. The Education Act of 1870 established a framework for universal elementary education in England and Wales, while subsequent legislation in the following decades made education both compulsory and free, resulting in a substantial increase in literacy rates. Unlike the aristocracy, who inherited wealth and status, the middle classes defined themselves through values of hard work, moral rectitude, and self-improvement—values that were both reflected in and reinforced by the literature they consumed. The middle-class Victorian reader typically sought works that were not only entertaining but also morally instructive and intellectually enriching, contributing to the distinctive moral seriousness that characterised most of the Victorian literature. Working-class readers, too, formed an increasingly significant portion of the reading public, accessing literature through public libraries, cheap editions, and serialised publications.

The remarkable growth of Victorian literature would not have been possible without the technological innovations and commercial developments that transformed book production and distribution during this period. The introduction of steam-powered printing presses in the early nineteenth Century dramatically increased the speed and reduced the cost of book production, making literature more affordable and accessible than ever before. The growth of circulating libraries, particularly Mudie's Select Library, established in 1842, enabled middle-class readers to access books that would have been prohibitively expensive to purchase outright. These commercial libraries wielded significant influence over literary production, as publishers catered to their preferences, particularly for the three-volume novel format that became standard during the Victorian Period. The growth of advertising in newspapers and magazines also played a crucial role in promoting books to potential readers. These technological and commercial developments created a literary marketplace that was increasingly governed by commercial considerations, requiring authors and publishers to be attentive to public taste while also providing opportunities for innovation and experimentation in response to changing reader preferences.

Perhaps the most significant development in Victorian publishing was the rise of serialisation, which fundamentally transformed the relationship between authors, readers, and texts. Many of the most celebrated Victorian novels initially appeared in monthly or weekly installments in periodicals before being published in book form. Charles Dickens pioneered this format with "The Pickwick Papers" (1836-1837), and its enormous success established serialisation as the dominant mode of fiction publishing for much of the Victorian Period. This format offered several advantages to authors and publishers: it reduced the financial risk of publication by allowing publishers to gauge reader response before committing to a complete book; it made fiction more affordable for readers who could purchase installments for a fraction of the cost of a complete novel; and it created a direct, ongoing relationship between authors and their audience, with writers

often adjusting their narratives in response to reader feedback. For readers, the serial format created a shared cultural experience, as families and communities would read and discuss each installment as it appeared, generating anticipation for the next Chapter of the story. Serialisation also influenced narrative structures, encouraging authors to employ techniques such as the cliffhanger ending to maintain reader interest from one installment to the next. The growth of periodical publication more broadly also provided venues for a wide range of literary forms beyond the novel, including short stories, essays, poetry, and literary criticism. Influential periodicals such as "Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine," "The Cornhill Magazine," and "Household Words" (edited by Dickens) functioned as important cultural institutions, shaping public taste and providing platforms for both established and emerging writers.

The Victorian novel stands as perhaps the most significant literary achievement of the era, evolving from earlier traditions into a sophisticated and multifaceted art form capable of addressing the complexity of modern life. The rise of the novel to a position of cultural dominance during this period reflected its unique capacity to capture the diversity and interconnectedness of Victorian society, to explore the psychological depth of individual experience, and to engage with contemporary social issues in a format accessible to a mass readership. The Victorian novel was characterised by an extraordinary diversity of forms and approaches. The social realism practiced by authors such as Charles Dickens, George Eliot, and Elizabeth Gaskell presented detailed portraits of contemporary life across different social classes, often with an implicit or explicit critique of social injustices and a call for reform. Dickens's panoramic narratives, from "Oliver Twist" (1838) to "Bleak House" (1853) and "Our Mutual Friend" (1865), combined vivid characterisation with penetrating examination of social institutions and urban conditions, employing techniques ranging from biting satire to sentimental pathos to engage readers emotionally in his vision of social change. George Eliot, in novels such as "Middlemarch" (1871-1872), pushed the realist novel toward greater psychological complexity and moral seriousness, exploring the internal lives of characters with unprecedented depth and subtlety while examining the intricate web of social relationships that shape individual destiny. The Victorian novel also embraced more sensational and melodramatic modes, as seen in the works of Wilkie Collins, whose pioneering detective novel "The Woman in White" (1859-1860) combined intricate plotting with exploration of legal and gender issues, and Mary Elizabeth Braddon, whose "Lady Audley's Secret" (1862) challenged conventional representations of femininity through its portrayal of a beautiful but dangerous heroine. The Brontë sisters developed a distinctive approach that combined elements of Gothic romance with psychological realism and social critique, as in Charlotte Brontë's "Jane Eyre" (1847) and Emily Brontë's "Wuthering Heights" (1847), works that explored passionate emotional states and challenged social conventions through their unconventional heroines and heroes.

By the late Victorian Period, the novel had further diversified to include the aestheticism of Oscar Wilde's "The Picture of Dorian Gray" (1890), the imperial adventures of Rudyard Kipling, the early science fiction of H.G. Wells, and the incipient modernism of Thomas Hardy and Joseph Conrad, demonstrating the remarkable flexibility and vitality of the form. The Victorian novel's rise to prominence was accompanied by significant formal innovations that expanded the narrative possibilities available to fiction writers. The most influential Victorian novels were characterised by their ambitious scope, often following multiple interconnected characters across different social milieux, as in Dickens's "Bleak House" or George Eliot's "Middlemarch," famously described by Virginia Woolf as "one of the few English novels written for grown-up people." This expansive approach reflected the Victorian awareness of society as an increasingly complex and interconnected system, in which individual lives were shaped by economic, social, and institutional forces beyond their control or even their awareness. To navigate this complexity, Victorian novelists developed sophisticated narrative techniques, including the use of multiple narrators and

perspectives to present different viewpoints on the same events. “Bleak House,” for example, alternates between an omniscient third-person narrator and a first-person account by the character Esther Summerson, creating a rich, multifaceted portrait of Victorian society while exploring themes of connection and disconnection. The cultivation of a strong narrative voice, often characterised by moral commentary and direct address to the reader, became another distinctive feature of the Victorian novel, creating a sense of intimate communication between author and audience that reflected the increasingly personal relationship between writers and readers in the age of serial publication. This narrative presence was particularly evident in the works of Dickens and Thackeray, whose distinctive authorial voices became central to their literary identities. Victorian novelists also pioneered techniques for representing consciousness and psychological complexity, laying the groundwork for the Stream-of-Consciousness Techniques that would be further developed by modernist writers. George Eliot, in particular, was noted for her penetrating psychological insight, exploring the intricate relationship between individual moral choice and social context, while Thomas Hardy’s later novels, such as “Jude the Obscure” (1895), pushed toward a more fragmented representation of consciousness that anticipated modernist innovations. These formal developments were accompanied by an increasingly self-conscious consideration of the novel as an art form, reflected in the growth of literary criticism and in novelists' own reflections on their craft.

While the novel dominated the Victorian literary landscape, poetry underwent its own significant evolution during this period, engaging with the same cultural forces that shaped fiction while developing distinctive formal and thematic approaches. Early Victorian poetry was marked by a tension between the influence of Romantic predecessors and the desire to develop new modes of expression appropriate to a changed cultural context. Alfred, Lord Tennyson, who served as Poet Laureate for much of the Victorian Period, embodied this tension in his work, combining Romantic lyricism with Victorian moral concerns and engagement with contemporary scientific and philosophical debates. His long elegy “In Memoriam A.H.H.” (1850), written over Seventeen years following the death of his friend Arthur Henry Hallam, exemplifies the Victorian struggle to reconcile religious faith with new scientific understanding, particularly the geological and biological discoveries that challenged traditional Christian beliefs. The poem’s famous lines, “There lives more faith in honest doubt, / Believe me, than in half the creeds,” captured the intellectual crisis experienced by many Victorians as they grappled with the implications of evolutionary theory and historical biblical criticism. Robert Browning developed the Dramatic Monologue into a sophisticated psychological instrument, creating poems such as “My Last Duchess” and “The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed’s Church” in which complex, often morally ambiguous characters reveal themselves through their own speech, requiring readers to engage actively in interpreting the gap between what is said and what is implied. Elizabeth Barrett Browning challenged conventional limitations on women’s poetry through works such as “Aurora Leigh” (1856), an ambitious verse-novel exploring a woman’s development as an artist, and her “Sonnets from the Portuguese,” which gave powerful expression to female desire and agency.

The Pre-Raphaelite Movement, led by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Morris, and Algernon Charles Swinburne, turned toward Medievalism and sensuous aestheticism in reaction against what they perceived as Victorian materialism and moral conventionality, developing a poetry rich in symbolic imagery and formal experimentation. By the end of the Victorian Period, poets such as Gerard Manley Hopkins were pushing the boundaries of poetic form and language in ways that anticipated modernist innovations, with Hopkins’s “sprung rhythm” and dense, compressed language representing a radical departure from conventional Victorian prosody. Throughout these developments, Victorian poetry maintained a deep engagement with the moral,

spiritual, and intellectual questions of the age, even as it explored new aesthetic possibilities and challenged conventional limitations on poetic expression.

The growth of Victorian literature was inseparable from the social and cultural transformations that characterised the period, with writers both responding to and helping to shape public understanding of these changes. The rapid industrialisation and urbanisation of Britain created new social configurations and problems that became central subjects for Victorian writers. The industrial novel emerged as a significant subgenre, with works such as Elizabeth Gaskell's "Mary Barton" (1848) and "North and South" (1855), Charles Dickens's "Hard Times" (1854), and Benjamin Disraeli's "Sybil" (1845) addressing the conditions of the working classes, the tensions between employers and workers, and the human costs of industrialisation. These works often sought to bridge the growing divide between social classes by cultivating sympathy for the suffering of the poor among middle-class readers, while also exploring possibilities for reconciliation and reform. The growth of cities, particularly London, transformed the physical and social landscape of Britain, creating new urban experiences that fascinated and often disturbed Victorian writers and readers. Dickens, in particular, developed a distinctive literary engagement with the modern city, portraying London as a labyrinthine, often nightmarish environment in which extreme wealth and desperate poverty existed in close proximity, connected by hidden networks of relationship and influence.

The expansion of the British Empire during the Victorian period also had profound implications for literature, introducing new settings, characters, and cultural perspectives while raising complex questions about British identity and moral responsibility. Early Victorian literature often portrayed colonial territories as exotic backdrops for adventure or as sources of wealth that could transform characters' fortunes, as in Jane Austen's references to West Indian plantations in "Mansfield Park" or the colonial entanglements in Dickens's "Dombey and Son." By the late Victorian Period, writers such as Rudyard Kipling, Joseph Conrad, and Robert Louis Stevenson were engaging more directly with the complexities and contradictions of imperial experience, reflecting growing ambivalence about the moral basis and sustainability of the imperial project.

The Victorian preoccupation with moral and social improvement found powerful expression in literature, which was widely viewed as having an important role in shaping individual character and promoting social reform. The moral purpose of literature was explicitly articulated by influential Victorian critics such as Matthew Arnold, who argued in "Culture and Anarchy" (1869) that literature and culture more broadly should work to develop "the best that has been thought and said in the world" as a counterbalance to the materialism and class conflict he saw threatening Victorian society. This view was widely shared by Victorian writers, publishers, and readers, who generally expected literature to provide not just entertainment but also moral guidance and insight. The moral orientation of Victorian literature was most evident in its treatment of individual character development, with the Bildungsroman or coming-of-age novel becoming a dominant form. Works such as Charles Dickens's "David Copperfield" (1850), Charlotte Brontë's "Jane Eyre," and George Eliot's "The Mill on the Floss" (1860) traced the moral and psychological development of their protagonists from childhood to maturity, emphasizing the formation of character through experience and choice. These narratives typically affirmed Victorian values of self-discipline, perseverance, sympathy, and moral integrity, though they often also contained implicit critiques of the social conditions that hindered the development of these qualities.

Victorian literature's moral concerns extended beyond individual character to address pressing social issues such as poverty, child labour, prostitution, and the treatment of the mentally ill. Social problem novels such as Dickens's "Oliver Twist" and "Bleak House," Gaskell's "Mary Barton," and Eliot's "Felix Holt, the Radical" (1866) sought to expose social injustices and build

support for reform by engaging readers' sympathies for marginalised and suffering characters. Many Victorian authors were directly involved in social Reform Movements, with Dickens, for example, supporting educational and sanitary reforms and advocating for the humane treatment of the poor, while Harriet Martineau's writings on political economy aimed to educate readers about the principles underlying social and economic systems. Victorian literature thus served as an important vehicle for social criticism and reform, helping to shape public opinion and policy through its powerful representations of social conditions and possibilities for change.

The Victorian Period was characterised by significant changes in gender roles and relationships, and literature both reflected and contributed to the era's complex gender politics. The "woman question"— the debate over women's proper role in society, their education, legal rights, and participation in public life—became a central concern for Victorian writers of both sexes. The Victorian ideal of femininity emphasised domestic virtues, with women portrayed as naturally suited to roles as wives and mothers, morally pure, self-sacrificing, and focused on the private sphere of home and family. This ideal found expression in popular literature such as Sarah Stickney Ellis's conduct books and in the "angel in the house" figure celebrated in Coventry Patmore's poem of that name. However, this restrictive model of femininity was increasingly challenged by the growing women's movement and by women writers who explored female experience with new depth and complexity. The novels of Charlotte and Emily Brontë presented passionate, independent-minded heroines who defied conventional expectations of feminine behavior, while George Eliot's works examined the limited opportunities available to intellectually gifted women and the psychological consequences of those limitations. By the late Victorian Period, the "New Woman" had emerged as a literary and cultural figure, represented in works such as Thomas Hardy's "Jude the Obscure" and Grant Allen's "The Woman Who Did" (1895)—a woman who sought education, work, and sexual freedom on equal terms with men, challenging traditional marriage and family structures. This figure provoked both fascination and anxiety among Victorian readers, reflecting the period's deeply ambivalent response to changing gender norms. Masculinity, too, underwent significant redefinition during the Victorian period, with the gentleman ideal increasingly emphasising moral character and self-discipline rather than aristocratic birth, and with new models of muscular Christianity and imperial masculinity emerging in response to perceived threats of national decline. Literature played a crucial role in articulating these changing gender ideals and in working through the anxieties they provoked, providing a space for imagining alternative gender arrangements and exploring their implications for individuals and society.

The Victorian Period witnessed profound religious and intellectual developments that fundamentally transformed the cultural landscape and found complex expression in the era's literature. The early Victorian period was characterised by intense religious activity, with the evangelical revival within the Church of England emphasising personal conversion and moral reform, the Oxford Movement seeking to revive Catholic traditions within Anglicanism, and nonconformist denominations such as Methodism and Baptism gaining increasing influence. Religious concerns permeated Victorian literature, from the explicitly Christian allegory of works such as Charles Kingsley's "The Water-Babies" (1863) to the more complex moral and theological explorations of novels such as Charlotte Brontë's "Jane Eyre" and George Eliot's "Silas Marner" (1861). However, traditional religious beliefs came under increasing pressure from scientific discoveries and historical criticism of the Bible. Charles Lyell's "Principles of Geology" (1830-1833) challenged the biblical account of creation by suggesting that the Earth was far older than previously believed and had been shaped by gradual processes still observable today, while Charles Darwin's "On the Origin of Species" (1859) proposed a mechanism for biological evolution that seemed to eliminate the need for divine creation of species. These scientific developments contributed to a crisis of faith that became a central theme in Victorian literature, most famously in

Alfred, Lord Tennyson's "In Memoriam A.H.H." and Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach" (1867), which mourned the "melancholy, long, withdrawing roar" of the "Sea of Faith." The Victorian period also saw the emergence of new philosophical approaches, including utilitarianism, positivism, and evolutionary ethics, which sought to ground morality in secular principles rather than religious authority. George Eliot, who translated Ludwig Feuerbach's humanistic critique of Christianity, "The Essence of Christianity," before beginning her career as a novelist, exemplified the Victorian attempt to preserve moral values within a secular framework, developing in novels such as "Middlemarch" a vision of human sympathy and moral community that did not depend on supernatural beliefs. The intellectual ferment of the Victorian period thus generated a literature of extraordinary richness and complexity, as writers grappled with the implications of new knowledge for traditional beliefs and values, seeking to articulate a vision of human meaning and purpose in a changing intellectual landscape.

The Victorian Period witnessed a remarkable diversification of literary forms and the emergence of new genres that reflected the changing interests and concerns of the reading public. One of the most significant developments was the rise of detective fiction, pioneered by Wilkie Collins in novels such as "The Woman in White" and "The Moonstone" (1868) and brought to its most famous expression in Arthur Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes Stories*, beginning with "A Study in Scarlet" (1887). The popularity of detective fiction reflected Victorian anxieties about social disorder and the desire for rational methods to restore stability and justice, with the detective figure embodying the Victorian faith in reason and scientific method as tools for solving problems. Science fiction also emerged as a distinct genre during this period, with Mary Shelley's earlier "Frankenstein" (1818) laying the groundwork for Victorian works such as H.G. Wells's "The Time Machine" (1895), "The Island of Doctor Moreau" (1896), and "The War of the Worlds" (1898), which used speculative scenarios to explore the implications of scientific and technological developments and to critique aspects of Victorian society. The ghost story flourished as well, with writers such as M.R. James, Sheridan Le Fanu, and Henry James developing sophisticated psychological approaches to supernatural themes, often using ghostly manifestations to explore repressed aspects of Victorian culture and consciousness.

Children's literature emerged as a major literary category during the Victorian period, with works such as Lewis Carroll's "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" (1865), Robert Louis Stevenson's "Treasure Island" (1883), and Rudyard Kipling's "The Jungle Book" (1894) establishing enduring classics of the genre. These works often combined entertainment with moral instruction but also contained subversive elements that challenged conventional Victorian attitudes toward childhood and education. The late Victorian period also saw the development of imperial adventure fiction, exemplified by the works of H. Rider Haggard and G.A. Henty, which celebrated British imperial expansion while also revealing anxieties about racial and cultural difference and the sustainability of the imperial project. This diversification of literary forms reflected both the expanding and increasingly segmented Victorian reading public and the growing professional specialisation of authors, who increasingly wrote for specific markets and readerships rather than for a general audience.

The Victorian Period also witnessed significant developments in literary criticism and theory, as writers and thinkers sought to articulate the nature and purpose of literature in a changing cultural landscape. The early Victorian Period saw the continuation of Romantic approaches to criticism, with an emphasis on the creative imagination and emotional expression, but these were gradually supplemented and sometimes replaced by more systematic and historically grounded approaches. Thomas Carlyle, in works such as "On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History" (1841), developed an influential view of literature as the expression of transcendental

truths through the inspired writer or prophet, an approach that informed his own distinctive prose style and his analysis of authors such as Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe and Robert Burns. Matthew Arnold brought a more explicitly moral and social focus to literary criticism, arguing in "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" (1864) and other essays, that the critic's role was to identify and promote "the best that has been thought and said in the world' as a means of cultural and social improvement. John Ruskin extended critical analysis to the visual arts and architecture in works such as "Modern Painters" (1843-1860) and "The Stones of Venice" (1851-1853), developing a moral and social interpretation of aesthetics that had a profound influence on Victorian art and design. The later Victorian Period saw the emergence of more aesthetically focused approaches to criticism, most notably in the works of Walter Pater, whose "Studies in the History of the Renaissance" (1873) advocated an intensely subjective appreciation of artistic beauty for its own sake, influencing the aesthetic movement and figures such as Oscar Wilde.

Literary biography also flourished during the Victorian period, with works such as Elizabeth Gaskell's "The Life of Charlotte Brontë" (1857) and John Forster's "The Life of Charles Dickens" (1872-1874) establishing important models for the genre. These varied critical approaches reflected the Victorian concern with defining the value and purpose of literature in relation to broader social and cultural developments, a concern that contributed to the establishment of English literature as an academic discipline in the late Nineteenth Century. The rich body of Victorian criticism and theory thus played a crucial role in shaping how literature was written, read, and understood during the period and beyond, contributing to the growth of a self-conscious literary culture in which authors and readers were increasingly aware of the formal and historical dimensions of literary production.

The last decades of the Victorian Period witnessed significant literary developments that both extended earlier Victorian traditions and anticipated the modernist innovations of the early Twentieth Century. The aesthetic movement, associated with figures such as Walter Pater, Oscar Wilde, and Algernon Charles Swinburne, represented a reaction against what was perceived as the moral didacticism and social utility of mainstream Victorian literature, advocating instead for "art for art's sake" and the pursuit of beauty and sensuous experience divorced from moral or social considerations. This movement found expression in works such as Wilde's "The Picture of Dorian Gray," which explored themes of beauty, corruption, and the relationship between art and life, and in the poetry of Swinburne, which combined formal virtuosity with provocative challenges to Victorian sexual and religious conventions. The aesthetic movement's emphasis on formal experimentation, subjective experience, and the autonomy of art from moral and social concerns anticipated key aspects of modernist literature. The late Victorian Period also saw the emergence of literary naturalism, influenced by French writers such as Émile Zola and by Darwinian evolutionary theory, which emphasized the determining influence of heredity and environment on human behavior and fate. Thomas Hardy's later novels, such as "Tess of the d'Urbervilles" (1891) and "Jude the Obscure," exemplified this approach, portraying characters struggling against social conventions and biological urges in a universe indifferent or hostile to human aspirations, their tragic fates shaped by forces beyond their control or understanding. Hardy's pessimistic vision, with its critique of Victorian sexual morality and social institutions, provoked strong reactions from contemporary readers and critics, anticipating the more radical challenges to Victorian values that would emerge in early Twentieth- Century Literature. The work of Joseph Conrad, particularly novels such as "Heart of Darkness" (1899) and "Lord Jim" (1900), represented another significant late Victorian development, combining penetrating psychological analysis with formal experimentation and a critical examination of imperialism and Western civilization. Conrad's complex narrative techniques, exploration of subjective consciousness, and moral ambiguity marked an important transition between Victorian and modernist literary approaches. These late

Victorian developments reflected both the continuing vitality of Victorian literary traditions and the emergence of new sensibilities and concerns that would find fuller expression in the Modernist Literature of the early Twentieth Century, demonstrating the dynamic and evolving nature of Victorian Literature throughout the period.

The extraordinary growth and development of Victorian Literature had a profound and lasting impact on the literary landscape, establishing conventions, themes, and approaches that continue to influence literature today. The Victorian novel, in particular, laid the groundwork for many subsequent developments in fiction, with its detailed social realism, psychological complexity, and moral engagement providing models for generations of novelists. The narrative techniques pioneered by Victorian writers, from Dickens's panoramic social vision to Eliot's psychological depth to Collins's intricate plotting, became fundamental resources for later fiction, adapted and transformed but never entirely abandoned. The genres that emerged or were developed during the Victorian Period, including detective fiction, science fiction, fantasy, and children's literature, have remained vital elements of literary culture, constantly renewed through engagement with their Victorian origins. Victorian poetry, too, left a significant legacy, with Tennyson's technical mastery, Browning's dramatic monologues, and Hopkins's linguistic innovations influencing the development of modern poetry, even as modernist poets defined themselves partly in opposition to Victorian poetic conventions. The Victorian engagement with social issues established literature as an important vehicle for social critique and reform, a function that literature has continued to serve in various forms up to the present day. The Victorian preoccupation with the relationship between literature and morality initiated debates about the ethical dimensions of aesthetic experience that remain relevant to contemporary literary criticism and theory. Perhaps most fundamentally, the Victorian period established literature as a central component of cultural life, accessible to an unprecedentedly broad public and engaged with the full range of human experience and social reality. This democratisation of literature, for all its limitations and complexities, represented a significant cultural achievement whose effects continue to be felt in the enduring popularity of Victorian works and in the continuing vitality of the literary forms and approaches they pioneered. The growth of Victorian Literature thus represents not merely a historical phenomenon but a living legacy that continues to shape how we write, read, and understand literature in the Twenty-First Century.

In conclusion, the growth of Victorian Literature represented a remarkable cultural flowering, driven by a complex interplay of social, technological, economic, and intellectual factors. The expansion of the reading public, the technological innovations that transformed publishing, the emergence of new literary forms and genres, and the engagement with the pressing social, moral, and intellectual questions of the age all contributed to an extraordinary period of literary creativity and development. From the social panoramas of Dickens to the psychological depth of Eliot, from the passionate intensity of the Brontës to the aesthetic refinement of Wilde, from Tennyson's elegiac meditations to Hardy's tragic vision, Victorian literature encompassed a remarkable diversity of voices and approaches, reflecting the complexity and dynamism of the age itself. What united these varied literary expressions was a profound engagement with the human condition in a time of unprecedented change, an attempt to make sense of a world in which traditional certainties were increasingly called into question and new forms of understanding and expression were urgently required. The Victorian writers' response to this challenge produced a body of work of enduring value and significance, work that continues to speak to readers today through its moral seriousness, psychological insight, social vision, and artistic achievement. The growth of Victorian literature thus stands as one of the great cultural legacies of the Nineteenth Century, a testament to the power of literary creativity to engage with and illuminate the complexities of human experience in times of radical transformation.

10.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VICTORIAN LITERATURE

The discoveries of Science have particular effects upon the literature of the Victorian Age. It is simple to mark the following four general characteristics:

1. **Realism:** Literature of this age comes closer to daily life which reflects its practical problems and interests. It becomes a powerful instrument for human progress.
2. **Moral Purpose**: The Victorian Literature seems to assert its moral purpose. Tennyson, Browning, Carlyle, Ruskin-all were the teachers of England with the faith in their moral message to instruct the world.
3. **Doubts or Contradictory Faiths and Philosophies:** It is often considered as an age of doubt and contradictory faiths and philosophies. The influence of science is felt here. Browning the optimist and Hardy the pessimist are regarded as most popular writers of the age. There is realistic literature with Pre-Raphaelite Poetry that believes in "art for art's sake".
4. **Idealism**: Though, the age is characterized as practical and materialistic, most of the writers suggest a purely ideal life. It is an idealistic age where the great ideals like truth, justice, love, brotherhood are emphasized by poets, essayists and novelists of the age.

Victorian Prose

Victorian Age produced two great essayists like Carlyle and Stevenson. Carlyle's major works include *The French Revolution* in 3vol. (1837), *On Heroes, Hero- Worship* and *the Heroic in History* (1841). His prose style differs from other prose writers. He writes about people and events of the past. He has his own philosophy. He accounts great men as Hero, whereas Stevenson writes famous essays in this period such as *A Night among the Pines, Walking Tours, An Apology for Idlers, A Plea for Gas lamps, El Dorado, Familiar Studies of Men and Books* and *Crabbed Age and Youth*. Stevenson's essays are an attempt in the direction of Human welfare. He wishes to remove all that creates obstacle in human progress and happiness. For example in his famous essay *An Apology for Idlers*-he point out the importance of direct education based on self-observation and self-learning. He puts stress on the quality of being happy for personal sake as well as social sake.

Victorian Poetry

It produced three great poets- Tennyson, Browning and Arnold. Tennyson is the most representative poet of the age. He represents Victorian conflict and compromise. He is a great lyric poet. His lyricism is deep rooted and dominates all of his poems. It makes his poetry sweet and smooth. His lyric can be divided into many parts like personal, dramatic, patriotic and musical lyrics or songs. Among Tennyson's personal lyric "In Memorium" is very important. It is a collection of lyrics composed on the death of his bosom friend Arthur Hallam. Tennyson's dramatic lyrics are in the form of dramatic monologues. Tennyson is admired as a pictorial artist. His description of the nature is highly sensuous. Robert Browning is known for his dramatic monologues and philosophy of hope. Browning is the greatest writer of dramatic monologues. All of his monologues deal with different aspects of love. Mathew Arnold is regarded as the greatest elegiac poet of Victorian Age.

Victorian Drama

It produced two great dramatists like Shaw and Galsworthy. Shaw is doubtlessly the greatest of all dramatists of this period. He contributed anti-romantic plays of ideas like *Candida* and *Apple Cart*. *Saint Joan* won Nobel Prize for him. Galsworthy is also a great dramatist. He is a problem play writer. He has a deep sympathy for the weaker section of society. In his dramas, he presents their problems to attract the attention of all the people of the society. It appeals more to head than to heart. The basic purpose of his plays is not to entertain but to make people conscious of others people's sufferings caused by imperfection of law and society. His famous plays are: *The Silver Box, Strife* and *Justice.*

Victorian Novel

It produced two great novelists like Charles Dickens and Hardy. The spirit of revolt is much more intense in the fiction than the poetry of this period. The most prominent novelists of the period are Charles Dickens and Thomas Hardy. Dickens is the great novelist. He makes the minute study of the whole mankind. He presents lively picture of human society. Dickens, "David Copperfield" is a representative novel in the sense that it throws light on the prevailing conditions of Victorian society. It is a social document that brings to light miserable condition of boarding-houses, women education, child labour and social injustice. Dickens is a social thinker working in the line of a social reformer. Hardy's best novel is *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Thomas Hardy published this novel in 1891 with subtitle-a pure woman. Tess of the d'Urbervilles is a young girl, who is raped by Alec D'Urbervilles. She gets pregnant, but the baby dies. It raises a question how such a woman may be called a pure woman. But Hardy proves it. She later falls in love with Angel Clare, but he deserts her. Alec assures her that Angel would not come back. Her family starves and she becomes a mistress to Alec. But Angel comes back and Tess murders Alec and spends a few moments of love with Angel before she is arrested to be hanged.

10.5 VICTORIAN COMPROMISE IN TENNYSON

Victorian Compromise is a combination of the positive and negative aspects of the contemporary issues of Victorian era. The Victorian era is well-known for its enrichment of knowledge in science, expansion of empire and growth of economy, conflict between the science and religion, conflict between aristocracy and democracy etc. All Victorian writers, in some way or the other, give expression to this conflicts and consequents. Some of the Victorians clung to the old faith and condemned the 'new-fangled opinions', others went over to the side of science, and still some others tried to draw some sort of compromise between the two conflicting forces. Tennyson can be classed with the third group, the one which stood for what is often called "The Victorian Compromise".

The problems of the day are wonderfully depicted in the writing of the poets of this era. Poets like Arnold of the Nineteenth Century started to hold a very pessimistic view about the Victorian crisis; he seems to express only a negative attitude toward his contemporary age. But we see a quite dissimilar attitude in Alfred Lord Tennyson. Unlike Arnold, he expressed a compromising attitude to his age and its intricate problems. We find in his *Ulysses*, *The Lotos Eaters*, *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, holds such a sort of view which is supposed to find a middle ground. He is neither too melancholic like Arnold nor too optimistic like Robert Browning. He tries to portray in his poems a real and clear picture of the problems of contemporary age in an implicit way. In fact the poem, "The Charge of the Light Brigade" which is based upon the Crimean war describes the marvelous courage of the British soldiers and pays homage to them. In his political opinions Tennyson shared the views of an average Victorian who believed in the golden mean, a compromise between democracy and aristocracy. He believed in slow progress and shunned revolution. In the field of sex, The Victorians permitted indulgence in sex but restricted its

sphere to happy married life. Tennyson reflects this spirit of the age in his love poems by pointing out that true love can be found only in married life. In Tennyson's "The Lady of Shallot" we are introduced to 'two young lovers' walking together in the moonlight, but we are at once reassured by the statement that these two lovers were 'lately wed'

In the Victorian Age, there was a huge conflict occurred especially because of Darwin's theory between science and religion. Darwin suggested that humans are actually originated from the apes. This struck the Orthodox, and moved the faith of people in religion what was contemporarily coming forward by the writings of the thinker. But Tennyson himself was too greatly affected by the development of science to remain an orthodox Christian yet still was not so much affected as to turn an unqualified agnostic. Because of the quality to look for a middle path, Tennyson is considered as a compromising craftsman who does neither yield to the crisis of his age nor possess a carefree attitude towards the problems, rather keeps compromising and finding a solution.

10.6 LET'S SUM UP

The Victorian era's literary influence has played a major role on its predecessors; whether it has to do with millennials' mindsets or even modern literature itself, the Victorian Period's narrow-mindedness, refined tastes, and seemingly narcissistic perception of oneself, although not agreeable nowadays, should be recognised as one of the most important moments for English literature and should be looked back on for further understanding of how it affected today's modern culture and society. The Victorian period begins with Queen Victoria's ascension to power, in the year 1837, and ends in 1901, with the queen's death. People may describe it as a time of prosperity, old-fashioned, where the people, the nation itself, were self-confident in their own capabilities and political strength. Additionally, the middle-classes were increasing in numbers, therefore many aspired for nobility rankings. For this reason, there was much abundance, but societal inequity as well. In fact, this period's entertainment was based on social class. For instance, Victorian literature was varied in characters and plot events, lengthy, realistic, and relatable to what the urban lifestyle was like to all classes. Social standards to what was considered to be moral and upright in that time were portrayed in various works, such as behaviors and stereotypical conducts for men and women alike. Thus, this period encompassing Tennyson's literary career, saw Britain grappling with scientific discovering, social changes, and evolving moral codes, leading to a tension between old and new. Tennyson as a Poet Laureate, reflected this this tension in his works, often portraying a struggle between faith and doubt, progress and tradition, and the allure of the past verses the realities of the present.

10.7 QUESTIONS

- Provide a Brief Outline of The Victorian Age.
- What are the chief characteristics of The Victorian Age?
- What are the main literary genres of the age?
- How did the Victorian poetry deviate in form and structure from the preceding age?
- What are the main features of the Victorian novels?
- What does the term Victorian Compromise denote?

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UNIT–11

PRE-RAPHAELITE POETRY

Structure

11.0 OBJECTIVES

After completing this unit we will be able to:

- Know about the Pre-Raphaelite Movement in art and literature in the 19th Century.
- Analyse that there was a marked shift from the Victorian tendencies in this movement.
- Understand the work and achievements of the movement's several practitioners.
- Unveil how this movement challenged the artistic conventions of its time.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

It is also known as Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood. Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood is also known as Pre-Raphaelites. It was a group of English painters, poets and critics, founded in 1848 by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who reacted against the artificiality of the art of the period. They wanted to return to the purity and simplicity of the Italian art of the 13th and14th Century (before Raphael). There were seven members in this "brotherhood". The Pre-Raphaelites defined themselves as a reform-movement. They were influenced by the ideas of the art critic John Ruskin, who considered art as a way to react to the ugliness of modern, urban life. The main characteristics were: fidelity to nature, sensuality, use of non-industrial materials, re-evaluation of medieval religion and legends. The

main representatives were: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones. William Morris created the Arts and Crafts Movement, which designed and manufactured a great variety of objects for interiors (stained glass, wallpapers, tapestries, rugs etc.). They used handicraft and simple decoration in reaction to industrial machinery.

11.2 THE PRE-RAPHAELITE MOVEMENT

The Pre-Raphaelite Movement stands as one of the most significant artistic and literary revolutions of the Victorian era. Emerging in the mid-19th Century, this movement challenged the artistic conventions of its time, seeking to restore what its founders perceived as the purity, sincerity, and detailed naturalism that characterised art before the High Renaissance painter Raphael (1483-1520). What began primarily as a brotherhood of painters soon expanded to encompass literature, poetry, design, and even social reform, leaving an indelible mark on Western cultural history. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood emerged in Great Britain during the middle of the 19th Century, a period marked by profound social, economic, and cultural transformations. The Victorian Era (1837-1901) witnessed unprecedented industrialisation, scientific advancement, imperial expansion, and social change. Britain had become the world's leading industrial power, with factories and railways transforming the landscape. Cities expanded rapidly, often resulting in overcrowding, pollution, and stark inequalities. The early Victorian Period was characterised by a strong emphasis on conformity, decorum, and moral rectitude. Art and literature were expected to uphold these values, often resulting in works that the younger generation perceived as conventional, superficial, and lacking authenticity. The Royal Academy of Arts, Britain's foremost art institution, promoted a style that adhered to rigid academic principles derived from Renaissance and Neoclassical traditions. This was also a time of intellectual ferment. The publication of Charles Darwin's "On the Origin of Species" in 1859 challenged religious doctrines, while the Oxford Movement sought to revive Catholic traditions within the Anglican Church. The Medieval Revival, or Gothic Revival, was gaining momentum in architecture and decorative arts, reflecting a romantic nostalgia for pre-industrial society. Against this backdrop of rapid modernisation and cultural conservatism, a group of young artists began to question the prevailing artistic conventions and sought inspiration in the art of the late medieval and early Renaissance periods, which they believed possessed a moral and spiritual purity that had been lost in the industrialised Victorian society. Thus, this movement rejected the convention of Victorian art before Raphael. In literature, this translated to a focus on beauty, detailed natural imagery, and symbolic themes often drawn from medieval romances, arthusian legends and classical literature.

11.3 THE PRE-RAPHAELITE BROTHERHOOD (1848)

In September 1848, three young students at the Royal Academy of Arts—Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882), William Holman Hunt (1827-1910), and John Everett Millais (1829-1896) — formed a secret artistic society which they named the "Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood" (PRB). They were soon joined by four others: the painter James Collinson, the sculptor and poet Thomas Woolner, the painter Frederic George Stephens, and Rossetti's brother, the critic William Michael Rossetti. The name "Pre-Raphaelite" was deliberately chosen to express their admiration for the artists who preceded Raphael (Raffaello Sanzio), whom they regarded as representing the beginning of a mannered, academic approach to art that emphasized technical virtuosity at the expense of truth to nature and emotional sincerity. By looking back to the artists of the late Medieval and early Renaissance Periods, the Brotherhood sought to recapture what they perceived as a more honest, detailed, and spiritually pure approach to representation. The Brotherhood was formed in reaction against what they saw as the stale conventions of contemporary academic painting, particularly the work of Sir Joshua Reynolds, the first president of the Royal Academy, whom they mockingly

referred to as “Sir Sloshua” due to his supposedly slapdash painting technique. They objected to the Grand Manner promoted by Reynolds and the Academy, with its emphasis on idealisation, historical and mythological subjects, and theatrical compositions. Besides these, the Pre-Raphaelites also advocated for:

1. Truth to nature, achieved through direct observation and detailed rendering of the natural world.
2. Bright, luminous colours applied to a white ground, rejecting the use of bitumen and other darkening agents common in academic painting.
3. Literary and biblical subjects treated with psychological depth and contemporary relevance.
4. Symbolic detail and typological imagery.
5. Technical innovation and experimentation.

The Brotherhood kept their association secret at first, signing their paintings with the enigmatic initials “PRB.” They also started a journal called “The Germ” (later renamed “Art and Poetry”), which published their poetry, essays, and illustrations. Although short-lived (only four issues were produced in 1850), this publication helped articulate their artistic philosophy and demonstrated the close connection between visual art and literature that would characterise the movement.

When the Pre-Raphaelites first exhibited their works, they initially received positive attention. Millais’s “Isabella” (1849) and Hunt’s “A Converted British Family Sheltering a Christian Missionary from the Persecution of the Druids” (1850) were generally well-received. However, the tide of critical opinion turned dramatically in 1850 when Millais exhibited “Christ in the House of His Parents” and Rossetti showed “Ecce Ancilla Domini” (The Annunciation).

The realism of these religious paintings shocked Victorian sensibilities. Charles Dickens famously lambasted Millais’s depiction of the Holy Family as “mean, odious, revolting, and repulsive.” Critics were disturbed by the Brotherhood’s rejection of idealisation in religious subjects, their use of contemporary-looking models, and their meticulous attention to seemingly irrelevant details. The Pre-Raphaelites were accused of willful archaism, crude technique, and even of harboring Catholic sympathies (a serious accusation in Protestant England). This controversy might have ended the movement before it truly began, had it not been for the intervention of the influential art critic and social theorist John Ruskin. After studying their works carefully, Ruskin wrote a letter to *The Times* in 1851 defending the Pre-Raphaelites. He praised their “earnest study of fact,” their “stern adherence to historical accuracy,” and their “rejection of conventional composition and treatment.” Ruskin’s support legitimised the Pre-Raphaelites in the eyes of many critics and patrons, allowing the movement to survive its initial controversy.

11.4 EXPANSION OF THE MOVEMENT

The original Brotherhood was short-lived as a formal association. By 1853, they had ceased to function as an organised group. Millais, seeking greater professional success, gradually adopted a more conventional style and was elected to the Royal Academy in 1853. Collinson resigned from the Brotherhood in1850 due to religious convictions. Woolner immigrated temporarily to Australia in search of fortune. However, the Pre-Raphaelite Movement was far from over. Rather than disappearing, it evolved and expanded in several directions. From the mid-1850s, Rossetti moved away from his earlier meticulous style toward a more sensuous, romantic approach, often focusing on female beauty and Arthurian legends. He gathered around him a new circle of younger artists, including Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898) and William Morris (1834-1896). This second wave of

Pre-Raphaelitism emphasised decorative richness, medieval revivalism, and the fusion of visual and literary arts. William Morris, inspired by Ruskin's social theories and Pre-Raphaelite aesthetics, founded Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Co. in 1861 (later Morris & Co.), a decorative arts firm that produced textiles, wallpaper, furniture, stained glass, and books. This enterprise extended Pre-Raphaelite principles into everyday objects and interiors, laying groundwork for the Arts and Crafts Movement. The Movement strongly influenced Victorian poetry and literature. Rossetti himself was both a painter and poet. Other poets associated with the movement included his sister Christina Rossetti, William Morris, Algernon Charles Swinburne, and later, Gerard Manley Hopkins. Their poetry often shared themes, imagery, and aesthetic principles with Pre-Raphaelite painting. The movement became increasingly associated with aesthetic and social theories, particularly through John Ruskin's writings and William Morris's socialism. Both argued that art had moral and social purposes and that the degradation of the arts reflected broader social ills in industrial society. By the 1860s and 1870s, Pre-Raphaelitism had transformed from a rebellious brotherhood into a broad cultural movement that influenced painting, poetry, design, architecture, and social criticism. This wider influence is sometimes referred to as "Pre-Raphaelitism" to distinguish it from the original "Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

11.5 INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCE AND THE AESTHETIC MOVEMENT

By the 1860s, Pre-Raphaelitism had begun to influence artists outside Britain. American painters like Thomas Charles Farrer and John La Farge adopted aspects of Pre-Raphaelite technique. In continental Europe, Symbolist painters were inspired by the dreamlike qualities and literary themes in later Pre-Raphaelite works. The movement also contributed significantly to the development of the Aesthetic Movement of the 1870s and 1880s, which emphasised "art for art's sake" and the pursuit of beauty as an end in itself. While the early Pre-Raphaelites had insisted on moral purpose in art, later works, particularly by Rossetti, prioritised sensuous beauty and emotional suggestion in ways that anticipated Aestheticism.

11.6 MAIN FEATURES OF THE PRE-RAPHAELITE MOVEMENT

One of the most fundamental principles of Pre-Raphaelite art was the commitment to observing and rendering nature with painstaking accuracy. Influenced by John Ruskin's exhortation to "go to Nature in all singleness of heart... rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, and scorning nothing," the Pre-Raphaelites painted directly from nature, capturing minute details with scientific precision. This approach manifested in several ways:

1. Botanical Accuracy: Plants and flowers in Pre-Raphaelite paintings are often identifiable to the species level. Millais's 'Ophelia" (1851-52) includes precisely rendered wildflowers and plants, each chosen for its symbolic associations.
2. Plein Air Background Painting: Unlike conventional painters who composed landscapes in the studio, Pre-Raphaelites often painted landscape backgrounds outdoors, capturing atmospheric effects and natural light directly from observation.
3. Geological Detail: Rocks, soil, and water were rendered with careful attention to their specific characteristics, reflecting the period's growing interest in geological science.
4. Rejection of Conventional Formulas: The Brotherhood rejected academic formulas for depicting drapery, foliage, or human anatomy, preferring to observe each element afresh.

Hunt described their approach as painting 'with the keenest sight and the most indefatigable industry." This devotion to visual truth sometimes led to extraordinarily long working periods. Hunt spent months in the Middle East to ensure authentic details in his biblical scenes, and Millais

reportedly stood for hours in a cold stream to capture the exact appearance of rippling water for "Ophelia."

Pre-Raphaelite paintings are immediately recognisable for their brilliant, jewel-like colors. This distinctive palette resulted from specific technical innovations. They painted on a wet white ground rather than the toned grounds favored by academic painters. This created a luminous surface that intensified the colours applied over it. The Brotherhood avoided the use of bitumen and other brown glazes commonly used in academic painting to create shadows and unify compositions. They considered these techniques dishonest shortcuts that obscured true observation. They used colors directly from the tube with minimal mixing, applying them in small strokes over the white ground while it was still wet, creating a brilliant effect similar to medieval illumination or enamel work. The Pre-Raphaelite paintings often feature distinctive lighting effects, with strong contrasts between light and shadow and careful observation of how light interacts with different surfaces and materials. This approach to colour was revolutionary in the context of mid-Victorian painting, which typically featured more subdued, harmonized tones. The bright Pre-Raphaelite palette initially shocked critics but eventually influenced broader trends in colour usage in late 19th-Century art.

Pre-Raphaelite paintings are densely packed with symbolic details that enrich their narratives and themes. Drawing on Medieval biblical exegesis, the Pre-Raphaelites often employed typological symbolism, where objects or events in their paintings prefigure or recall biblical types. For example, in Hunt's "The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple" (1854-60), the carpentry tools reference Christ's future crucifixion. Flowers and plants were included not merely for decorative purposes but for their traditional symbolic associations. In "Ophelia," the flowers correspond to those mentioned in Shakespeare's text, each carrying specific meanings related to Ophelia's character and fate. Objects and settings were carefully chosen to reinforce the moral or spiritual message of the work. In Hunt's "The Awakening Conscience" (1853), the cat playing with a wounded bird symbolizes the predatory nature of the relationship depicted. Especially in Hunt's work, paintings often contain elaborate symbolic programmes that reward careful reading and interpretation, functioning almost like visual sermons.

The Pre-Raphaelites looked back to Medieval and early Renaissance art for inspiration, adopting several characteristic elements. Early Pre-Raphaelite works often feature compressed pictorial space reminiscent of Medieval Painting, with limited use of atmospheric perspective. Their colour palette recalled medieval manuscript illumination and early Renaissance painting before the development of chiaroscuro techniques. Textiles, foliage, and decorative elements were rendered with intricate patterning similar to that found in Medieval Art. They drew inspiration from the 15th-Century (Quattrocento) Italian art, particularly the works of artists like Botticelli, Fra Angelico, and early Raphael. This Medievalism was not merely stylistic but reflected a deeper admiration for what they perceived as the spiritual sincerity and moral purpose of Pre-Raphaelite art. It also aligned with the broader Victorian Gothic Revival in architecture and decorative arts.

Pre-Raphaelite art is deeply intertwined with literature, drawing on a wide range of textual sources. Religious subjects were approached with fresh psychological insight and contemporary relevance. Hunt's "The Light of the World" (1851-53) presents Christ in a uniquely Victorian spiritual context. Millais, Rossetti, and later Pre-Raphaelites frequently illustrated scenes from Shakespeare's plays, particularly female characters like Ophelia, Mariana, and Juliet. Rossetti, named after the Italian poet, created numerous works inspired by Dante's "Vita Nuova" and "Divine Comedy." In the second phase of Pre-Raphaelitism, Arthurian subjects became increasingly important, influenced by Tennyson's "Idylls of the King" and Malory's "Morte

d'Arthur." Works by Tennyson, Keats, and the Browning's provided subjects for many Pre-Raphaelite paintings.

The representation of women is one of the most distinctive aspects of Pre-Raphaelite art, revealing complex Victorian attitudes toward femininity. Rossetti developed a distinctive female type—tall, statuesque women with copper hair, full lips, and long necks—who became known as "Rossetti women" or "stunners." Pre-Raphaelite art often explored the Victorian fascination with female sexuality, depicting both dangerous seductresses (like Rossetti's "Lady Lilith") and fallen women deserving compassion (Hunt's "The Awakening Conscience"). Female characters from literature were depicted with psychological depth and complexity, often at moments of crisis or transformation. The relationship between Pre-Raphaelite artists and their female models was often intimate. Elizabeth Siddal, Jane Morris, Fanny Cornforth, and others served as both models and muses, their faces and personalities inspiring numerous works. While Pre-Raphaelite women are often presented as objects of male desire, they frequently possess a powerful presence and psychological autonomy unusual in Victorian art. This complex treatment of femininity reflects Victorian anxieties about women's changing social roles, as well as the artists' personal relationships with their female models and the influence of female writers associated with the movement, such as Christina Rossetti and Elizabeth Siddal.

11.7 THE PRE-RAPHAELITE POETS AND THEIR WORKS

11.7.1 Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882)

Dante Gabriel Rossetti stands as the central figure of the Pre-Raphaelite poetry, bridging the visual and literary dimensions of the movement. Born to Italian expatriate parents in London (his father was a Dante Scholar), Rossetti was immersed in literature from childhood. While primarily trained as a painter, he wrote poetry throughout his life. His personal life—particularly his relationships with Elizabeth Siddal (who died of a laudanum overdose in 1862) and Jane Morris (wife of William Morris, with whom Rossetti had a long affair)—profoundly influenced his art and poetry. After Siddal's death, Rossetti buried a manuscript of poems with her, only to have it exhumed in 1869 when he decided to publish them. This macabre episode, along with his increasingly reclusive behavior and dependence on chloral hydrate and whisky, created a sense of scandal around his later career. His frames were integral to his understanding of a work of art as a beautiful object. In his middle years he created vivid watercolours and intricate drawings on theme of tone and morality. The paintings of mysterious female figures for which he is most famous emerged in 1859.

His Works

"The House of Life" (1870, revised 1881), is Rossetti's masterpiece, a sonnet sequence of 101 sonnets exploring love, death, art, and spiritual yearning. The sequence traces an emotional and spiritual autobiography, moving from youthful passion through loss and spiritual crisis to a tentative reconciliation with mortality. Notable sonnets include "The Sonnet," "Love-Sweetness," 'The Portrait," "Willow Wood," and "Known in Vain."

"The Blessed Damozel" (1847-1870): Written when Rossetti was only 18, this poem (which he also rendered as a painting) depicts a maiden in heaven looking down on her still-living lover. The poem creates a sensuous vision of heaven while exploring the painful separation of lovers by death.

"Jenny" (1870): This dramatic monologue presents the reflections of a young man who has spent the night with a prostitute. The poem combines social critique with personal guilt and desire, juxtaposing the sleeping woman's physical presence with the speaker's conflicted thoughts.

"Sister Helen" (1870): A ballad depicting a woman using witchcraft to take revenge on a faithless lover, this poem combines medieval atmosphere with psychological intensity.

Translations from the Italian: Rossetti produced important translations of Dante's "Vita Nuova" and early Italian poetry, helping introduce these works to Victorian readers.

Poetic Style and Themes

Rossetti's poetry is characterised by:

1. Fusion of Sensuality and Spirituality: His work consistently blends physical desire with spiritual yearning, often using religious imagery to express erotic feeling and vice versa.
2. Visual Precision: As a painter-poet, Rossetti creates highly visual poetry, often focusing on specific gestures, expressions, or physical details.
3. Symbolic Landscapes: Like his paintings, his poems often use landscape as an externalisation of emotional states, particularly in the "Willow wood" sonnets.
4. Fascination with Death: Many poems explore the boundary between life and death, reflecting both personal loss and Victorian death culture.
5. Musicality: Rossetti's verse demonstrates careful attention to sound patterns and rhythm, creating memorable cadences, particularly in his ballads.
6. Psychological Complexity: His dramatic monologues and sonnets reveal complicated psychological states, often mixing desire, guilt, grief, and yearning.

Rossetti's influence extended beyond the Pre-Raphaelite circle, shaping the Aesthetic Movement and Symbolism, and influencing poets from Swinburne to Yeats.

11.7.2 William Morris (1834-1896)

While renowned as a designer, craftsman, and social reformer, William Morris was also a significant poet whose work embodied Pre-Raphaelite ideals in distinctive ways. Born to a wealthy family, Morris was educated at Oxford, where he met Edward Burne-Jones and came under Rossetti's influence. Initially planning to enter the church, he turned instead to architecture, then to art and design. His founding of Morris & Co. in 1861 revolutionised Victorian decorative arts. Morris's increasing political radicalism led him to socialism in the 1880s. His utopian novel "News from Nowhere" (1890) envisioned a future society based on craftsmanship, beauty, and social equality. This political dimension distinguishes Morris from other Pre-Raphaelites and connects his aesthetic ideals to broader social reform. He is particularly known for his intricate and nature inspired designs for textiles, wallpaper, and stained glass, as well as his contribution to typography and bookdesign.

Major Works

"The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems" (1858): Morris's first poetry collection, dedicated to Rossetti, includes Arthurian narratives, medieval ballads, and historical lyrics. Poems like "The Defence of Guenevere" and "King Arthur's Tomb" reimagine Arthurian material with psychological complexity and sensuous detail.

"The Life and Death of Jason" (1867): This book-length narrative poem retells the Greek myth of Jason and Medea, combining classical material with medieval atmosphere and psychological insight.

“The Earthly Paradise” (1868-1870): Morris’s ambitious poetic cycle presents 24 narrative poems arranged by season, alternating Classical and Medieval tales. Framed as stories told by Norse wanderers who have found refuge in a western land, these narratives explore themes of desire, mortality, and the consolations of art.

“Love is Enough” (1872): This unusual work uses a complex structure of nested narratives and varying meters to explore the relationship between love, art, and fulfillment.

“Sigurd the Volsung” (1876): Based on Norse sagas, this epic poem was Morris’s personal favorite among his works. It combines heroic narrative with psychological exploration and reflects his growing interest in Nordic literature.

Poetic Style and Themes

Morris’s poetry features:

1. Narrative Emphasis: Unlike Rossetti’s lyric intensity, Morris excelled at extended narrative poetry, revitalising Medieval and Classical storytelling traditions.
2. Decorative Abundance: His poetry contains richly detailed descriptions of architecture, textiles, gardens, and artifacts, reflecting his work as a designer.
3. Medievalism: Many poems recreate Medieval atmosphere through archaic diction, chivalric themes, and formal patterns derived from Medieval Literature.
4. Natural Imagery: Detailed descriptions of landscapes, seasons, and flora reveal Morris’s observant eye and love of natural beauty.
5. Craftsmanship: Morris approached poetry as a craft, emphasizing careful technique and construction, much as he did in his design work.
6. Melancholy Undertone: William Morris’s “The Defence of Guenevere” employs melancholy to explore themes of love, guilt, and moral complexity.

11.7.3 Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

Sister to Dante Gabriel, Christina Rossetti became one of the Victorian era’s most significant poets in her own right. While sharing many Pre-Raphaelite sensibilities, her work was distinguished by its deep religious devotion, contemplative nature, and restrained passion. Her early pieces often meditate on date and loss in the romantic tradition. Her first two poems published were “Death’s Chill Between” and “ Heart’s Chill Between”, in the Athenaeum magazine in 1848.

Major Works:

“Goblin Market and Other Poems” (1862): Her first and most famous collection, with the title poem combining fairy tale elements with themes of temptation, sacrifice, and sisterly love.

“Remember" (1862): A sonnet addressing the speaker’s beloved about remembrance after death.

“When I am dead, my dearest” (1862): A lyric about the transience of grief and memory.

“The Prince’s Progress and Other Poems” (1866): Her Second Volume, including the title narrative poem about a prince who arrives too late to save his bride.

“A Pageant and Other Poems” (1881): Including “Monna Innominata,” a sonnet sequence giving voice to the silent beloved women of earlier sonnet traditions.

“Verses” (1893): A collection of her devotional poetry.

11.7.4 Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909)

Though slightly later than the original Pre-Raphaelites, Swinburne became closely associated with the movement, particularly through his friendship with Rossetti. His poetry pushed Victorian boundaries with its sensuality, paganism, and technical virtuosity. He is particularly noted for discerning studies of Elizabethan dramatists and many English and French Poets and Novelists. In response to criticism of his own works, he wrote critical essays , including " Notes on Poems and Reviews" (1866) and " Under the Microscope"(1872), which are known for wit and insight.

Major Works:

"Atalanta in Calydon" (1865): A drama in Classical Greek form that established his reputation.

"Poems and Ballads" (1866): A controversial collection featuring erotic and pagan themes.

"Songs Before Sunrise" (1871): Poetry celebrating republicanism and liberty.

"Tristram of Lyonesse" (1882): A narrative poem retelling the Medieval Romance.

"A Century of Roundels" (1883): Showcasing his mastery of intricate poetic forms.

11.7.5 Elizabeth Siddal (1829-1862)

Initially a model for the Pre-Raphaelite painters (and later Rossetti's wife), Siddal was also a poet and artist in her own right. Though her poetic output was small and largely unpublished during her lifetime, her work offers a female perspective on Pre-Raphaelite themes.

Major Works:

"The Lust of the Eyes" (written c.1860)

"Lord May I Come" (written c.1860)

"A Year and a Day" (written c.1860)

"Love and Hate" (written c.1860)

11.8 SALIENT FEATURES OF PRE-RAPHAELITE POETRY

The first characteristic of the Pre-Raphaelite Poetry is that it was a revolt and reaction against the conventionality of poetry represented by Tennyson. The poets of this school revolted against the harshening use of poetry to the service of social and political problems of the age. Tennyson concentrated on social, religious, and political life of the age. It was against this age bound poetry that the Pre-Raphaelite raised their revolt and introduced the new standard of the glorification of art rather than the glorification of fleeting and temporary values of mundane life.

The second characteristics is that the Pre-Raphaelites above all, were artists and their poetry was artistic creation. Art was their religion. They were the votaries of art for art's sake. The poetry of this movement had no morality to preach and no reforms to introduce to the correctness of societal life. Life of beauty was their creed, and if in glorifying beauty they had to be sensuous, the feared not the charges of the moralists and orthodox Puritans. D. G. Rossetti's sonnets "The House of Life" signalise love in its glory as well as desolation. He combines spiritual and sensuous aspects of love in his sonnets. The poets aimed both in poetry and painting at perfect form and finish.

The third characteristic of the Pre-Raphaelite Poetry is that the poets, to escape from the darkness and ugliness of contemporary society, the turned their eyes to the good old days of medievalism when chivalry and knighthood, adventure and heroism were in the air. D. G. Rossetti

was the hero of this return back to medievalism for poetic inspiration. His poems *The Blessed Damozel* (1850) and *Sister Helen* (1853) are Medieval in outlook and form. *The Blessed Damozel* is equally inspired by *The Divine Comedy* by Dante. The other members of the school Hunt and Millais were a little skeptical of the medieval tradition. There is also a note of love for the Middle Ages in Christina Rossetti's Poems. Her *Goblin Market* (1862) is steeped in medievalism and supernaturalism. The poem tells the story of Laura and Lizzie who are tempted with fruit by goblin merchants, who resembles animals with faces like wombats or cats with tails.

The fourth characteristic of Pre-Raphaelite Poetry is that this poetry reviving the Biblical theme, we can see it in the poem of Christina Rossetti's 'Eve' (1864) which deals with the theme of repent and sadness. The poem set in the Biblical era. It dates back to the time after the banishment of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. This poem is Christina Rossetti's attempts to show the anguish and pain felt by Eve after she was banished from the Garden of Eden because of the sin she committed. The poem 'Eve' shows Christina's intellectual abilities and her deep knowledge in Catholic beliefs.

The fifth characteristic of the Pre-Raphaelite Poetry is that the poets of this school use metaphors to express their feelings. Christina Rossetti's poem 'A Sketch' uses metaphor in the lines: The blindest buzzard that I know, Does not wear wings to spread and stir, Nor does my special mole wear fur. In the poem she talks about her friend, terming him as 'buzzard' and 'mole'. The Pre-Raphaelite Poetry's characteristics are very rich and very vast. It focuses on the glorification of art, escape from the darkness, and the ugliness of contemporary society, continuation of Romantic poetry, and gives a strong conception of scenes and situation, precise delineation, lavish imagery and metaphor.

By these characteristics, the Pre-Raphaelite Poetry leaves a lasting impression in the English Literature. The Brotherhood soon began to disperse. Collinson resigned in 1850, Woolner emigrated to Australia in 1852 (an event memorialised in Madox Brown's modern life painting The Last of England, 1852–1855), and it had effectively ceased to exist by the time of Holman Hunt's departure in search of religious subject matter in Palestine in 1854. The works produced from this trip—*The Scapegoat* (1855) and especially *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple* (1860)—established Hunt as "the painter of the Christ." Millais moved to Scotland in 1856 and there created a series of poetic, lyrical works, including *Autumn Leaves* (1856), before turning to portraiture and more conventional forms of historical painting. Becoming a member of the Royal Academy in 1855, Millais soon joined the artistic establishment and ended his life as president of the academy; from PRB, as one wag put it, to PRA. A series of criticisms are leveled against Pre Raphaelite Poetry. 'The Fleshly School of Poetry' is a fierce attack on the Pre-Raphaelite School. Written in 1871, the essay was first published in *The Contemporary Review* under the pseudonym 'Thomas Maitland'. Principally, 'Maitland' focuses on the art and poetry of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, brother to Christina Rossetti. After being publicly accused by Rossetti, the poet Robert Buchanan confirmed that he was the author. Buchanan believed that Pre-Raphaelite art was excessively 'sensual' implying 'that the body is greater than the soul …. Appalled at what he saw as highly sexualised imagery, Buchanan declared Pre-Raphaelitism a source of moral corruption. A rather melodramatic vocabulary is used to convey his disgust, with Rossetti's work described as 'nastiness', 'trash' and 'morbid'. Furthermore, Buchanan accuses the Pre-Raphaelites of being imitators of contemporary poets such as Tennyson, and asserts that the Brotherhood's popularity has been forced by its members slyly agreeing to praise and publicize each other. Although Buchanan does grant Rossetti some praise, it is always brief and often double-edged. In addition to seeming prudish and, in Rossetti's words, 'malicious', Buchanan's criticism contains other flaws. As Rossetti points out in his response, 'The Stealthy School of Criticism', Buchanan unfairly draws

on short quotations that are removed from the wider context of the poem and the collection they are published within. Secondly, Buchanan looks at the poetry as purely biographical without an attempt to understand it as art. As Rossetti argues, 'no such passing phase of description as the one headed 'Nuptial Sleep' could possibly be put forward by the author as his own representative view of the subject of Love'.

11.9 LET'S SUM UP

Pre-Raphaelitism actually means a certain type of painting in imitation of the great Italian painters who flourished before the time of Raphael (1488-1823) and who were said to be simple, sincere, and devoted. The term was first used by a group of German artists who had worked together with the avowed idea of restoring art to medieval purity and simplicity. The term is now generally applied to a group of seven young painters – D. G. Rossetti, his brother William, W. H. Hunt, Thomas Woolner, F. G. Stevens, J. Jettison, and J. E. Millais. They formed the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in England in 1848. They took, for their models, early Italian painters before Raphael. Their purpose was to restore simplicity and naturalness in art, against the growing artificiality and materialism of the age. They turned to the middle ages for their models, and one of their professed aims was to express wonders and reverence, and awe that characterize Medieval Art. They condemned strongly the mechanised style in painting, then in vogue, and rather preferred individuality and naturalness to make art really free, true, and graceful. They took for their models, Giotto, Belem, and Fra Angelico, whose art had the marks of individuality, sincerity, and naturalness- those very qualities, which were absent in the works of the successors of Raphael.

Pre-Raphaelitism, which originated in painting, appeared in the poetical world, in the course of time, in the Victorian age. In the latter half of the 19th Century, under the impact of the Industrial Revolution, Pre-Raphaelite poetry appeared, with the basic endeavor to unify poetry and painting. Pre-Raphaelite poetry is found to follow the concept of Pre-Raphaelite painting, as laid down by Rossetti. The Pre-Raphaelite poets are all found word-painters, and the essence of their poetry is perceived in their pictorial quality. In this respect, they appear to be the devout followers of the great Victorian, Lord Tennyson, and bear the Keatsian romantic tradition. It is their fidelity to painting, their genius in the pictorial representation in art that may be looked upon as the chief element of merit in their poetry. The Pre-Raphaelite poets came in an age, troubled with social and moral speculations. The relation between religion and science, faith and rationality, mysticism and materialism, was the key question of the age. The Pre-Raphaelites, however, did not participate in that great debate of the age. They kept themselves apart and aloof from the conflict between faith and materialism and from the growing social problems of Victorian life and society. They kept themselves away from Tennyson's spiritual convictions, Browning's optimistic speculations, Arnold's criticism of life, or Newman's faith in the old religious order.

11.10 QUESTIONS

- What is Pre-Raphaelite Movement in art and Literature?
- What were the main reasons behind the emergence of the Pre-Raphaelite Movement?
- Describe Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.
- What are the main features of the Pre-Raphaelite Movement?
- Who are the main poets of the Pre-Raphaelite Movement?
- What are the main features of D.G. Rossetti's Poetry?

- Describe the salient features of the Pre-Raphaelite Poetry.

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UNIT-12

NAUGHTY NINETIES

Structure

12.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit the Learners will be able to:

- Understand the historical meaning of the word 'Naughty'.
- Understand how Naughty Nineties is related to the Victorian Age.
- Understand the development of writing forms.
- Analyse the different literary generes during the period.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

The 1890s in Britain, often referred to as the "Naughty Nineties," marked a fascinating period of artistic rebellion, cultural transformation, and literary innovation. This decade witnessed the culmination of many Victorian tensions and the seeds of modernism that would fully blossom in the early 20th Century. The term "Naughty Nineties" suggests the period's reputation for challenging conventional morality, exploring taboo subjects, and experimenting with new aesthetic

forms and philosophies. English literature of the last decade of the 19th Century is termed as Naughty Nineties because it was a revolt against the tendencies of early decades of Queen Victoria. The Victorian Era achieved much scientific knowledge and developed incomes of industry trades and commerce. But at the end of the era a new revolt arose. The publications of two magazines "Yellow Book" and "The Savoy" gave expression to the revolt-against Victorian ideas. The revolt of the Nineties has three aspects. Firstly, they emphasised the old idea of liberty, equality and fraternity. Secondly, they worship power rather than beauty. Thirdly, they challenged the values of art and life and criticise the idea of Victorian Compromise.

The Nineties was a period of literary activity. Poetry, Novel and Drama flourished with new vigour. Huxley and Oscar Wilde are some of the important writers of nineties. They reacted against Victorianism. They wanted to restore the spirit of romance to novel. They made novel a criticism of social documents. In poetry we also find a similar reaction. Poetry became pessimistic in tone. It was a period of indecision and disillusionment. The drama of the Nineties also marks a new beginning. In fact the Nineties was a revolt against Victorian ideals of manner and morality.

The last decade of the Nineteenth Century is characterised by "naughtiness". "Victorianism" is a complex collection of several values, and the revolt of the nineties against Victorianism is also quite complex. This revolt has three points. First, it repeats the old revolutionary formula of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, in a new setting. Secondly, it worships power than beauty. And thirdly, it challenges the older values of art and life. In the literature of the Nineties two distinct tendencies are exposed: the pessimistic tendency and Continental tendency. In the poetry of the nineties, we consider Robert Bridges and Hardy as representatives poets. The most prominent novelist of the period is Thomas Hardy. The last years of 19th Century witnessed a dramatic revival. The most vigorous drama of the age was concerned with social and domestic problems and was considerably influenced by Ibsen. Oscar Wilde's plays have the tone of social criticism. Shaw is doubtlessly, the greatest of all the dramatists of this period. It is known in the United Kingdom as the Naughty Nineties, and refers there to the decade of supposedly decadent art of Aubrey Beardsley, the witty plays and trial of Oscar Wilde, society scandals and the beginning of the Suffragette Movement.

12.2 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

The Late Victorian Era: A Society in Transition

To understand the literature of the 1890s, we must first understand the society that produced it. The 1890s represented the final decade of Queen Victoria's long reign (1837-1901) and occurred during a time of significant social, technological, and cultural transformation:

Imperial Tensions:

Britain stood at the height of its imperial power, controlling approximately one-quarter of the world's land surface, yet also experiencing growing challenges to its dominance.

Class Divisions:

Extreme wealth existed alongside abject poverty, with the privileged aristocracy and burgeoning middle class contrasting sharply with the working poor, particularly in London.

Gender Politics:

The "New Woman" emerged as a cultural figure who challenged traditional gender roles, sought education and independence, and questioned marriage and sexual conventions.

Sexual Identity:

Discussions of sexuality became more open, with growing awareness of sexual diversity and challenges to heteronormative assumptions.

Scientific Revolution:

Darwin's theories of evolution had profoundly shaken religious certainty, while new psychological theories began exploring the human unconscious.

Technological Change:

Urbanisation, industrialisation, and new technologies transformed daily life and created new anxieties about the pace of change.

Artistic Movements:

Aestheticism and Decadence gained prominence, emphasising "art for art's sake" and rejecting Victorian moral utility in favour of beauty, sensation, and experience. Against this backdrop of change and uncertainty, the literature of the 1890s emerged as both a reflection of and response to these societal tensions.

12.3 WHAT MADE THE NINETIES "NAUGHTY"?

The term "Naughty Nineties" encapsulates several key elements that made the decade scandalous by Victorian standards:

Moral Transgression:

Writers openly addressed previously taboo subjects including sexuality, homosexuality, drug use, and criticism of religious institutions.

Aesthetic Rebellion:

The elevation of beauty over morality and sensory experience over ethical instruction directly challenged Victorian artistic principles.

Decadence:

An embrace of artificial over natural beauty, corruption over purity, and excess over restraint characterised much of the period's art and literature.

Gender Subversion:

Both male and female writers challenged conventional gender roles and sexual politics of the era.

Formal Experimentation:

New literary forms and styles emerged that broke from Victorian realism and prefigured modernist techniques.

These transgressive elements made the decade's literature particularly shocking to mainstream Victorian sensibilities, earning it the "naughty" moniker that has endured to this day.

12.4 NAUGHTY NINETIES – A REVOLT AGAINST VICTORIANISM

In the last ten years of the Century many powerful new forces are to be seen at the workfolk pulling down the edifice of Victorianism. The process of destruction (party of re-construction) was attended with a lot of confusion, stress and strain. Therefore, Joseph Warren Beach is right in saying that the last years of the Nineteenth Century were, "a somewhat miscellaneous and uneasy period." Some ultra-Radicals as Oscar Wilde were "naughty" in their revolt against the Victorian

inhibition on sex, and in their advocacy of "art for art's sake". Most of the outstanding Victorians had been critics and revolutionaries who stood against the time-spirit. Carlyle, Ruskin, Arnold and Rossetti may be noted in this context. But in this decade the condemnation and criticism of Victorianism is more wholesale and through than ever before. The basic assumptions of the age is now criticised for the first time.

12.5 KEY LITERARY MOVEMENTS

Aestheticism: Art for Art's Sake

Aestheticism, which had its roots in earlier decades but reached its apex in the 1890s, proposed that art should be valued primarily for its beauty rather than any moral, political, or educational function. The rallying cry of "art for art's sake" (from the French "l'art pour l'art") became central to this movement.

Key Characteristics of Aesthetic Literature:

- Emphasised sensory experience and beauty
- Rejected didactic purposes for art
- Featured rich, ornate language and imagery
- Often incorporated references to visual art, music, and ancient cultures
- Portrayed the artist as a special, refined individual with unique sensibilities

Walter Pater's writings, particularly his "Conclusion" to "Studies in the History of the Renaissance" (1873), provided the philosophical foundation for the movement with its call to burn with a "hard, gem-like flame" and to pursue intense, beautiful experiences. By the 1890s, this philosophy had evolved into a more developed literary aesthetic.

Decadent: Celebrating Artifice and Excess

While closely related to Aestheticism, the Decadent Movement took aesthetic principles further by celebrating artificiality, excess, and even corruption. Influenced by French writers like, Charles Baudelaire and Joris-Karl Huysmans, British Decadent literature revealed in the artificial, the perverse, and the exotic.

Key Characteristics of Decadent Literature:

- Preference for the artificial over the natural
- Fascination with decay, disease, and death
- Exploration of taboo subjects and unconventional sexuality
- Elaborate, ornate style often described as "purple prose"
- Interest in esoteric knowledge, occultism, and altered states of consciousness
- Rejection of bourgeois values and conventional morality

The Decadent Movement was particularly associated with the literary journal "The Yellow Book" (1894-1897), which featured many of the decade's most controversial writers and artists, and with "The Savoy" (1896), edited by Arthur Symons.

Symbolism: Finding Deeper Meaning

Though more prominent in French literature, Symbolism influenced many British writers of the 1890s. Symbolism sought to express ideas, emotions, and states of mind through symbols rather than direct statement or realistic representation.

Key Characteristics of Symbolist Literature:

- Use of symbols to represent abstract ideas or emotional states
- Emphasis on the mystical and spiritual dimensions of experience
- Interest in dreams and the unconscious
- Musicality of language and poetic form
- Suggestion rather than statement

The Symbolist influence can be seen in the works of writers like W.B. Yeats, Arthur Symons, and Oscar Wilde, who incorporated symbolist techniques into their writing.

The New Woman: Challenging Gender Conventions

The "New Woman" fiction of the 1890s challenged traditional Victorian gender roles and explored the experiences of women seeking independence, education, and sexual autonomy. Often controversial, these works addressed previously taboo subjects including female desire, failed marriages, and women's rights.

Key Characteristics of New Woman Literature:

- Female protagonists who seek independence and self-fulfillment
- Exploration of women's sexuality and desire
- Criticism of conventional marriage and gender roles
- Advocacy for women's education and professional opportunities
- Discussion of "taboo" topics like venereal disease, contraception, and divorce

Writers like Sarah Grand, George Egerton, and Olive Schreiner produced works that challenged Victorian assumptions about female nature and proper roles for women in society.

12.6 MAJOR WRITERS

12.6.1 Oscar Wilde (1854-1900): The Quintessential Naughty Nineties Figure

No discussion of the Naughty Nineties would be complete without Oscar Wilde, whose life and work epitomised the period's transgressive spirit. Wilde's wit, flamboyant personality, and ultimately tragic downfall made him the decade's most iconic literary figure.

Key Works:

The Picture of Dorian Gray (1890, Revised 1891)

Wilde's only novel shocked Victorian readers with its implied homoeroticism, celebration of youth and beauty over morality and exploration of corruption and decadence. The story of a beautiful young man whose portrait ages while he remains youthful despite his increasingly depraved lifestyle embodies key elements of Aesthetic and Decadent philosophy. This novel elevates beauty and pleasure over conventional morality, contains coded homosexual elements and

homosocial desire, explores themes of corruption, duplicity, and the dark side of human nature featuring exquisite, ornate descriptions of sensory experiences, includes references to "poisonous" French Novels (likely Huysmans' A rebours) and presents the dandy figure (Lord Henry Wotton) as a compelling alternative to Victorian propriety.

Salome (1891, Published in English 1894)

Initially written in French and banned from performance in England, this One-Act Play reimagines the biblical story of Salome, who demands the head of John the Baptist (here called Jokanaan). Wilde's version turns the tale into a story of perverse sexual desire and obsession. It combines biblical material with decadent sensibility featuring elaborate, sensuous language, contains themes of sexual obsession and perversion, portrays female sexuality as dangerous and destructive, incorporates symbolist techniques and imagery and challenges Victorian religious and moral sensibilities

His other important works include: *Lady Windermer's Fan* (1892), *A Woman of No Importance* (1893), *An Ideal Husband* (1895), and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895). Wilde's social comedies seem, on the surface, more conventional than his other works. However, they use wit and paradox to subtly undermine Victorian values while appearing to uphold them. *The Importance of Being Earnest*, in particular, represents the culmination of Wilde's dramatic art, using frivolity and absurdity to create what he called "a trivial comedy for serious people." They exemplify the Naughty Nineties by employing witty epigrams and paradoxes to subvert conventional wisdom, presenting dandy figures who reject Victorian earnestness and utility, exposing the hypocrisy beneath respectable Victorian society. These works also challenge conventional views on marriage, gender, and social class, use artificial, highly stylised dialogue and situations, celebrated style, surface, and appearance over substance and depth.

Wilde's personal life ultimately became as controversial as his work. His trials and imprisonment for "gross indecency" in 1895 marked a turning point in the Naughty Nineties, as public sentiment turned against the period's more transgressive elements.

12.6.2 Arthur Symons (1865-1945): The Chronicler of Decadence

Arthur Symons played a crucial role as both practitioner and theorist of the Decadent and Symbolist Movements. His poetry explored urban experiences, sexuality, and the world of music halls and dancers, while his criticism helped define and explain the new literary movements.

Key Works:

Silhouettes (1892) and London Nights (1895)

These poetry collections established Symons as a leading Decadent poet. *London Nights*, in particular, caused controversy with its frank depictions of London's nightlife, including music halls and encounters with dancers and prostitutes. These collections exemplify the Naughty Nineties by exploring urban sensations and experiences**,** frankly addressing sexual desire and encounters feature music hall performers and dancers as subjects**,** employing impressionistic techniques to capture fleeting moments, challenging Victorian reticence about sexuality and celebrating artificial experiences and environments.

The Symbolist Movement in Literature (1899)

This influential work of criticism introduced English readers to French Symbolist poets and helped define the characteristics of Symbolist literature. Though published at the end of the decade, it summarized many of the aesthetic developments of the 1890s. It advocates for new literary approaches against Victorian conventions, emphasises the spiritual and mystical dimensions of art,

introduces continental influences on British literature, rejects materialistic and utilitarian approaches to art and positions literature as a quasi-religious experience.

As an editor of *The Savoy*, Symons also provided a platform for many Decadent and Symbolist writers after the demise of *The Yellow Book*.

12.6.3 Aubrey Beardsley (1872-1898): Visual Provocateur

Though primarily an illustrator rather than a writer, Aubrey Beardsley's distinctive black and white drawings defined the visual aesthetic of the Naughty Nineties. His illustrations for *Salome*, *The Yellow Book*, and other publications shocked Victorian sensibilities with their erotic content, grotesque elements, and Japanese-influenced style.

Key Works:

Illustrations for Wilde's Salome (1894)

Beardsley's provocative illustrations complemented Wilde's text with their combination of eroticism, horror, and beauty. Images like "The Climax" and "The Peacock Skirt" became iconic representations of Decadent art. They exemplify the Naughty Nineties by combining beauty with grotesque and macabre elements, featuring explicit and implicit sexual imagery, incorporating androgynous and gender-ambiguous figures, using Japanese-influenced techniques and compositions, challenging Victorian visual conventions and taste and employing elaborate decoration and pattern.

Art Direction of the Yellow Book (1894-1895)

As an art editor for the first four volumes of *The Yellow Book*, Beardsley helped establish the journal's provocative visual identity. Though he was dismissed after Wilde's arrest (despite having no direct connection to the scandal), his influence on the publication's aesthetic continued. This work created a distinctive visual brand for decadent literature**,** combined sophisticated design with shocking content established the "yellow" colour as associated with decadence (referring to the "yellow-backed" French novels considered immoral)**,** integrated continental artistic influences and challenged conventional Victorian illustration styles. Beardsley's premature death from tuberculosis at the age of 25 cut short a brilliant career, but his distinctive style remains one of the most recognisable aspects of 1890s culture.

12.6.4 Ernest Dowson (1867-1900): Poet of Beautiful Sadness

Ernest Dowson embodied the tragic aspect of the Decadent Movement. His poetry, with its themes of unrequited love, brief beauty, and inevitable decay, captures the melancholy undercurrent of the Naughty Nineties.

Key Works:

Verses (1896)

This collection contains Dowson's most famous poems, including "Non Sum Qualis Eram Bonae sub Regno Cynarae" (which gave us the phrases "gone with the wind" and "days of wine and roses") and "Vitae Summa Brevis" (with the line "they are not long, the days of wine and roses"). This collection combines classical references with modern sensibilities, features themes of lost love, regret, and mortality, employs careful metrics and musical language, explores the transience of beauty and pleasure, references Catholic imagery and Latin phrases and captures the melancholy beneath decadent pleasure-seeking.

Dilemmas: Stories and Studies in Sentiment (1895)

Dowson's prose works, though less well-known than his poetry, further explore themes of impossible love and aesthetic experience. It features aesthetically-minded protagonists, explores psychological states and inner conflicts, presents love as problematic and often unattainable, employs refined, carefully crafted prose and privileges emotional and aesthetic truth over realism.

Dowson's personal life, including his unrequited love for a young girl and his struggles with alcoholism, came to represent the self-destructive aspect of the Decadent Movement. His early death in 1900 symbolically marked the end of the Naughty Nineties Era.

12.6.5 W.B. Yeats (1865-1939)

Though Yeats would go on to become one of the 20th Century's greatest poets, his early works showed clear Decadent and Symbolist influences. His involvement with the Rhymers' Club, the Occult Society 'The Golden Dawn' connected him to the Naughty Nineties cultural scene.

The Wind Among the Reeds (1899)

The work incorporates symbolist techniques and imagery. It draws on mystical and occult traditions featuring elaborate, musical language. It also explores dreams and visions, rejects Victorian materialism and rationalism creating a personal mythology and symbolic system.

12.6.6 Lionel Johnson (1867-1902)

Johnson's poetry often combined Decadent aesthetic sensibilities with Catholic religious themes, creating a distinctive blend of the sacred and profane.

The Dark Angel (1893)

This work explores conflicts between spiritual aspirations and physical desires. It employs refined, classical poetic forms, uses religious imagery in aestheticised contexts, addresses themes of temptation and renunciation and reflects the period's interest in Catholicism (several Decadent figures converted).

12.6.7 John Davidson (1857-1909)

Davidson's work often engaged more directly with social issues than that of his fellow Rhymers, but shared their interest in urban life and psychological states.

Fleet Street Eclogues (1893)

The work adapts classical forms to modern urban settings and explores the psychological impact of city life. It addresses social issues from an aesthetic perspective, combines realism with symbolist elements and presents the modern poet as both part of and alienated from society.

12.6.8 Thomas Hardy (1840-1928): Challenging Victorian Morality

Though Hardy began publishing well before the 1890s and his style differs significantly from the Decadents, his controversial novels of the 1890s addressed many of the same taboo subjects that characterised the Naughty Nineties, particularly regarding sexuality and marriage.

Key Works:

Tess of the d'Urbervilles (1891)

Subtitled as- "A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented," shocked readers by presenting its "fallen" protagonist as morally pure despite her sexual transgression. The novel's frank treatment of sexual themes and criticism of Victorian moral hypocrisy align it with the decade's challenges to conventional morality. The novel challenges Victorian sexual double standards and presents a sympathetic "fallen woman" as protagonist. It questions religious and social conventions, criticizes

class prejudice and exploitation. It includes veiled but clear references to rape and sexual coercion and offers a pessimistic view of human society and fate

Jude the Obscure (1895)

Hardy's last novel proved even more controversial than *Tess*, with its depiction of a doomed relationship outside marriage, criticism of matrimonial law, and shocking scene of child suicide. The public outcry was so severe that Hardy abandoned novel-writing altogether. It directly challenges the institution of marriage, portrays sexual desire outside sanctioned relationships, features a "New Woman" character in Sue Bridehead, criticizes religious hypocrisy and educational elitism, includes one of the most disturbing scenes in Victorian literature (the children's suicide) and resents a bleak view of society's treatment of nonconformists.

Hardy's novels, though written in a realistic rather than decadent style, contributed to the decade's reputation for challenging Victorian moral and sexual conventions.

12.7 SALIENT FEATURES OF "NAUGHTY NINETIES" LITERATURE

A central feature of Naughty Nineties literature was its emphasis on sensation, experience, and perception rather than moral instruction or realistic representation. Detailed descriptions of colours, sounds, scents, tastes, and textures created rich sensory landscapes. The blending of sensory experiences (colours having sounds, etc.) reflected the period's interest in unusual perceptual states. Following Walter Pater's advice to burn with a "hard, gem-like flame," writers valued intense experience over lasting happiness. Experiences of dreams, visions, drugs, and extreme emotions provided access to non-ordinary perception. It focuses on capturing fleeting moments of perception rather than extended narrative development. These sensory elements created a literature that valued immediate experience over moral or intellectual content, directly challenging Victorian didactic traditions.

Perhaps the most "naughty' aspect of Nineties literature was its frank exploration of sexuality and desire in various forms. New Woman writers portrayed female sexual desire with unprecedented openness. Coded (and sometimes not-so-coded) references to same-sex desire appeared in works by male and female writers. Androgynous characters and fluid gender identities challenged Victorian sexual categories. Dangerous, seductive female figures like Wilde's Salome embodied anxieties about female sexuality.

The literature of the 1890s was marked by a profound aesthetic rebellion. Writers sought to challenge traditional narrative structures, experimented with language and form, explored psychological depth, and questioned established social and moral conventions. Oscar Wilde's "The Picture of Dorian Gray" epitomised this approach, presenting a provocative exploration of beauty, morality, and personal identity that shocked contemporary readers while revolutionising literary expression.

The decade saw an increased focus on psychological depth and interior landscapes. Writers began to delve deeper into character motivations, explore subconscious desires, challenged simplistic moral narratives and represented complex human emotions. Thomas Hardy's novels, such as "Tess of the d'Urbervilles," exemplified this trend, presenting nuanced characters whose inner lives were as important as their external actions.

In this period literary genres underwent significant transformation. The novel became more experimental, short story forms became more sophisticated, poetry explored new rhythms and themes and emerging genres like science fiction gained prominence. H.G. Wells' scientific

romances, including "The Time Machine" (1895), represented a groundbreaking approach to narrative, blending scientific speculation with literary imagination.

12.8 LET'S SUM UP

The 1890s, often referred to as the "Naughty Nineties," was a decade of remarkable social transformation, artistic innovation, and subtle rebellion against Victorian moral constraints. This period marked a critical transition between the buttoned-up Victorian era and the more modern sensibilities of the 20th Century. The 1890s witnessed a significant push against the rigid social norms of the Victorian Era. While outwardly maintaining a veneer of propriety, society began to challenge long-standing moral restrictions. The "Naughty Nineties" was not merely a decade of scandal, but a crucial period of transition. It represented a nuanced bridge between the conservative Victorian era and the more dynamic, complex world of the 20th Century. The 1890s represented a pivotal moment in literary history. Positioned between the rigid Victorian Era and the emerging modernist sensibilities, the decade's literature was characterised by rebellion, experimentation, and profound social critique. Writers of this period challenged existing narrative structures, explored complex psychological landscapes, and laid the groundwork for 20th- Century literary innovations. The "Naughty Nineties" were not merely naughty in a provocative sense, but revolutionary in their approach to art, society, and human experience. The literature of this decade continues to resonate, offering insights into a transformative period of cultural and artistic evolution. Simply we can say that it is known as the 'Naughty Nineties' because this was the decade that saw the witty plays and trial of Oscar Wilde; the formation of the French Cancan dancers; and the beginning of the suffragette movement. Unsurprisingly, women's fashion in this decade evolved radically to reflect the new era. Thus, this era saw a rise in interest in art and literature that challenged traditional Victorian sensibilities, often characterized by a sense of hedonism and a focus on individual expression.

12.9 QUESTIONS

- What do you understand by the term "Naughty Nineties"?
- What made the "Nineties" naughty?
- Discuss the Naughty Nineties as a revolt against the Victorian tendencies.
- Who are the major writers of the Naughty Nineties?
- What are the main characteristics of the Aestheticism?
- How does the New Woman Literature challenge gender convictions?
- How does Thomas Hardy challenge the Victorian morality?

12.10 FURTHER READINGS

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BLOCK-4 INTRODUCTION

This block is designed to have a detailed knowledge of the Modern Age literature. Literature of the Modern Age has many diverse tendencies and is characterized by a significant departure from traditional literary forms and themes. It is marked by experimentation, a focus on individual consciousness, and a response to the rapid societal changes, including the two World Wars. In order to reflect the shifting world and the disintegration of conventional values, modernists experimented with new forms of expression. The effects of technology and war, existentialism, alienation, and a decline in trust in established institutions are all common themes. Techniques like fragmented narratives, stream-of-consciousness, and an emphasis on psychological interiority became popular. The modernist movement was greatly influenced by the effects of World War I, the growth of industrialization, and urbanization. Modernist writers were also impacted by new developments in political theory, psychology, and philosophy, which caused them to examine the uncertainties of the contemporary world and challenge conventional wisdom. This block is divided into four units:

Unit – 13 delves deeper to the study of the 20th Century Literature. It encompasses many Modern Literary Movements, viz., Georgian Poetry, Imagism, Symbolism and The Movement. It explores in detail historical background of the 20th Century Literature, main features of the Age, Georgian Poetry along with its emergence, its main characteristics, and the major contributors with their important works. The discussion further expands to the study of Imagism, its emergence, cause of its popularity and notable writers and their works, Symbolism, its historical and social context, Literary Symbolism, its main characteristics with major authors and their works and finally The Movement, its historical background, literary precursors, major writer and their chief works.

Unit – 14 focuses mainly on the development of the novel in the 20th century. Significant shifts in novel writing took place during the 20th century, with the rise of the Campus Novel, the Psychological Novel, and the Stream of Consciousness Novel. Authors like Virginia Woolf and James Joyce are exemplary instances of the Stream of Consciousness, which strives at illustrating the unrestrained flow of an individual's feelings and ideas. Through the use of stream-of-consciousness techniques, the Psychological Novel probed the inner workings of characters' minds, frequently delving into their subconscious desires and motivations. A later development, the Campus novel first appeared in the 1950s and centered its story inside a university, frequently examining themes related to academic life and the lives of teachers and students.

Unit – 15 provides a detailed study to the 20th Century Drama and its different forms like – the Problem Play, the Theatre of the Absurd, the Expressionistic Drama and the Kitchen Sink Drama. The emergence of television and film, which altered audience expectations and engagement, was one of the many factors that profoundly impacted the dynamics of drama in the 20th century. The rise of the new forms of drama like the Absurd Drama, The Problem play, the Expressionistic Drama and the Kitchen Sink Drama reshaped the theatrical narrative, while notable playwrights like Samuel Beckett, J. B. Priestley, and Noël Coward contributed a variety of themes, from existentialism to the nature of time. Though earlier attempts lacked the intended dramatic impact, poetic drama also saw resurgence during this time.

Unit – 16 discusses about the Post-Colonial Literature, Feminism, Post-Modernism and Post-Structuralism. The late 20th century saw the emergence of several interrelated critical frameworks that challenged established power structures and worldviews, including post-colonial literature, feminism, postmodernism, and post-structuralism. The study of colonialism's legacy and lingering impacts on formerly colonized countries and peoples is known as post-colonialism. Gender inequality and the social construction of gender are examined by feminism in all of its manifestations. Postmodernism embraces fragmentation and subjective experience while criticizing

grand narratives and universal truths. Influenced by postmodern theory, post-structuralism challenges established identities and power structures by dismantling language and meaning. These frameworks frequently intersect and influence one another, especially when it comes to their shared interest in questioning accepted wisdom and investigating underrepresented viewpoints.

UNIT–13

20th CENTURY LITERATURE – GEORGIAN POETRY, IMAGISM, SYMBOLISM, THE MOVEMENT

Structure

13.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit the learners will be able to:

1. Understand the historical context of the Twentieth Century Literature
2. Understand key aspects of the Georgian Poetry
3. Analyse the Imagism as a literary movement
4. Understand the emergence and development of Symbolism and The Movement
5. Differentiate between the literature of the 20th Century and the literature of the preceding age.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

Literature as a whole grows and changes from generation to generation. It is not static, but dynamic because each age has its own particular point of interest and its own way of feeling and thinking about things. It is the comprehensive essence of the intellectual life of nation. We may distinguish one age or the other by pointing out certain trends and movements that shape the one age or the other. But what happens when we set to analyses the 20th Century? We are lost into the vagueness of variety and quality of literary works that have been product in this age. The 20th Century stands as a period of unprecedented transformation in English Literature, a tumultuous era that witnessed radical changes in social structures, global conflicts, technological advancements, and philosophical thinking. Literature became a powerful medium for exploring the complexity of human experience, reflecting the profound shifts that characterised the Century. From the lingering shadows of the Victorian era to the postmodern experimentations of the late Twentieth Century, English Literature evolved dramatically, challenging traditional narratives, experimenting with form and language, and giving voice to previously marginalised perspectives.

13.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The dawn of the 20th Century emerged from the long reign of Queen Victoria, a period characterised by strict social norms, imperial expansion, and a rigid class structure. The literature of the early decades reflected both the remnants of Victorian sensibilities and the emerging tensions that would come to define the Century. The Edwardian Era, though brief, marked a transitional period where writers began to question established social conventions and explore more complex psychological landscapes.

The two World Wars profoundly impacted English Literature, serving as watershed moments that fundamentally altered societal perspectives. The World War I, with its unprecedented brutality and senseless loss of life, shattered the optimistic narratives of progress and civilisation.

Writers, who experienced the war, such as Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, produced poetry that starkly contrasted with the heroic war narratives, instead revealing the horrific realities of modern warfare.

The interwar period witnessed significant social and cultural transformations. The collapse of the British Empire, the rise of modernism, and increasing global interconnectedness created a fertile ground for literary innovation. Writers began experimenting with narrative techniques, challenging traditional storytelling methods, and exploring the complexities of human consciousness.

The World War II further accelerated these changes, bringing about a profound sense of global interconnectedness and highlighting the potential for both human destruction and resilience. The aftermath of the war saw the emergence of postcolonial literature, with writers from former British colonies using English as a medium to challenge imperial narratives and explore complex cultural identities.

13.3 MAIN FEATURES OF THE AGE: LITERARY AND SOCIAL

In the beginning, modernism began as an anti-tradition movement against existing forms of art, literature, philosophy, culture and society, and impacted other activities of daily life such as architecture, fashion, modes of transport, and connectivity. Modernism, true to its name represented a clash between the old and the new. It rejected all traditional forms as irrelevant and outdated to fit in with the new economic, social, and political environment of a modern competitive, industrialised world. The poet Ezra Pound's injunction to 'Make it New!' inspired artists and writers to re-examine established cultural, aesthetic, and religious traditions and bring a change in all aspects of life. The 20th Century saw the beginnings of an aesthetic modernism in literary and visual arts. In painting between 1890 and 1910, came different art movements such as Dadaism, Surrealism, Cubism, Constructivism, Minimalism, Vorticism, Futurism, and Fauvism distinct from the earlier forms of Classicism, Gothic art, Baroque, Naturalism, Realism, and Romanticism to name a few. In short, realistic painting or representation of reality in painting was abandoned. Similarly in music, melody and harmony were given up in favour of atonalism and indeterminacy whereby a musical piece can be performed not in any one fixed way, but in substantially different ways. It marked the break-down of all traditional aesthetic conventions, and introduced complete freedom in all aesthetic dimensions, including melody, rhythm, harmony and tone.

In architecture the new trend was for geometrical forms instead of the earlier ornamental styles. It included open spaces, use of new and innovative technologies of construction, particularly the use of glass, steel, and reinforced concrete; the emphasis was on functionalism, minimalism and a rejection of ornament.

In literature, traditional realism, closed endings, chronological plots and consecutive narratives were set aside in favour of experimental forms that included open endings, symbolism, individualism, formalism and absurdity. Modernism thus ushered in changes in culture, society, literature and arts. Even as modernism started on a rebellious note against tradition, it harboured nostalgia and deep regret for all those lost fragments from the earlier age. In the poem 'The Wasteland' (1922), by T. S. Eliot, the poet explicitly says 'These fragments I have shored against my ruin'. This single line sums up a despairing nostalgia for what has been lost. The loss of all certainties that had earlier sustained society in the past had caused a vacuum in the absence of a sustainable replacement. 'The Waste Land' appeared four years after World War I, ended in 1918. Eliot was affected by the emotional and spiritual sterility that was both the cause and consequence of the war. Human beings had lost faith in God and religion, and in the absence of any strong

anchor to hold on to, were rudderless and lost even the passion for life. They led a life-in-death existence, a life without hope of salvation, a life of disillusionment and despair with no possibility of moral and spiritual regeneration. All that remained were the broken cultural fragments from a vanished past that remained to be salvaged, holding out the vestige of hope as a distinct possibility. Eliot's 'The Wasteland' mirrored the mental, emotional and spiritual aridity of the time. The triple repetition of 'Om Shanti' at the end of the poem sounds more like wishful thinking. Eliot's poem mirrored the paralysis of the mind and sterility of emotions, where the brain seemed paralysed, emotions sterile and the spirit violated. As one of the holocaust survivors said, 'we have not died; we are dead. They've managed to kill in us not only our right to life in the present and for many of us, to be sure, the right to a future life . . . but what is most tragic is that they have succeeded, with their sadistic and depraved methods, in killing in us all sense of a human life in our past, all feeling of normal human beings endowed with a normal past, up to even the very consciousness of having existed at one time as human beings worthy of this name".

Modernist literature is innovative and experimental in form and content. These experimental writings were at their height during the first three decades and slowly declined over the next two decades. The intervening World War (1939-45) started the downslide of modernism and less than two decades thereafter, postmodernism became the dominant theory. Modernism peaked between 1910 and 1930 with some of the best works produced in England and Europe by great English poets, artists and novelists like T. S. Eliot, W. B. Yeats, Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis, Virginia Woolf, Wallace Stevens and Gertrude Stein and French and German writers like Marcel Proust, Stephane Mallarme, Andre Gide, Franz Kafka and Rainer Maria Rilke.

The aim of the modern poet is economy, the use of minimum possible words for producing maximum effect and highly elliptical diction where each words is charged with a wealth of meaning. The distortion of language is so violent, indeed in its comparison even the wildest linguistic 'rape' of Hopkins has lost their sanctity and even words have been telescoped and merged together in order to express the exact configuration of the thought processes, their turn and tangled webs- Joyce demanded at least the whole of readers life time for the comprehension of its meaning. Similar Process has also been at work to break and remould the structure of verse of preparing a true, complex and many-sided mould for complex thoughts and feelings.

Especially, after the world wars all illusions, on which men's belief rested war shattered. D.H. Lawrence revolted against the industrial civilisation and wished to return to the primitive tradition which was close to nature. Post war period was of universal madness. Aldous Huxley in his famous novel 'Point Counter Point' represents the spiritual vacuum that the modern man was possessed with. Virginia Woolf, unable to reconcile herself with the wretched life of the modern man committed suicide for she was caught between the two worlds, "One dead, other too powerless to be born". She exploited the problems of death, life, time and personality.

Nietzsche in his "Thus Spoke Zarathustra" declared, can it be possible, this old saint in the forest has not yet heard that god is dead. Since then the number of men or whom god in dead is ever increasing. Out of step with nature with self and with the lows of historical evolutionary growth, the modern man has gone out of focus.

In 'The Spiritual Crisis of Man', Paul Brunton has left out the open secret, how at very hour of its grandest trial, when it has won the supreme conquest over the material things and subtle forces, world civilisation turned into a tragedy. The man who for long pitied his ancient and medieval fathers is now himself to be pitied. "There is a ground for declaring that the modern man has become a modern idiot or misfit in a world he himself has created as well as destroyed."

Modern drama also bears of the profound impact of the deep and baffling problems of the world or modern age. There was a European development, "The Theater of the Absurd", following the disillusionment caused by the World War and particularly by the World War II. The phrase 'Theater of the Absurd' was coined by Martin Esslin (Drama critic of B.B.C .) who after studying some playwrights points out the key themes as the dread, anguish, lack of communication, estrangement, alienation, self-crises among the human beings. Ionesco, a Romanian dramatist defines: 'Absurd is that which is levied of Purpose…… cut off from his religion, metaphysical and transcendental roots, Man is lost, all his actions become senseless absurd, of bitter.'

These playwrights dramatised the philosophy of bitter helplessness of man abandoning logical construction plausible characterization and precise or poetic language. All the elements of the play exhibit the same senselessness and irrationality that they find in human affairs. Their theater 'has announced arguing about the absurdities of human condition, it merely presents it is being, that is on terms of concrete stage images of existence'.

13.4 GEORGIAN POETRY

Respect for the technical aspects of poetry and romantic subject matter characterise Georgian poetry, often known as Georgianism. The poems frequently featured themes of nature and rural life and employed straightforward rhyme schemes and metrical patterns. The Georgian poetry movement faded into the background following the World War I and the destruction it brought. Several movements within the larger modernist genre took their place. Nowadays, when used in reference to poetry, the term "Georgian" can be derogatory. Georgian Poetry represents a significant but often overlooked phase in English literary history, bridging the Victorian Era and Modernism. Flourishing primarily between 1910 and 1922, this movement emerged during the reign of King George V—hence its name—and encompassed a group of poets whose work was characterised by a delicate balance between tradition and innovation. The movement gained prominence through five influential anthologies edited by Edward Marsh under the title "Georgian Poetry," which showcased the work of poets who sought to revitalise English verse by moving away from the ornate language of late Victorian poetry while still maintaining connections to traditional forms and rural themes.

The Georgian poets wrote during a period of profound social and cultural transformation. Their work reflected the tensions of an era marked by rapid industrialisation, political uncertainty, and eventually, the devastating impact of the World War I. While initially celebrated for bringing fresh vitality to English poetry, the Georgian Movement would later be criticised by Modernist poets and critics for its perceived conservatism and sentimentality. However, this dismissive view fails to acknowledge the nuanced contributions of Georgian poetry to the development of Twentieth- Century English Literature.

13.5 LITERATURE BEFORE THE GEORGIANS

To understand the significance of Georgian poetry, it is essential to consider the literary context from which it emerged. By the early 1900s, English poetry was largely dominated by late Victorian conventions. The influential figures of this period included Alfred Lord Tennyson, Robert Browning, and Algernon Charles Swinburne, whose works often featured elaborate language, classical allusions, and ornate forms.

The aesthetic movement of the 1890s, led by figures such as Oscar Wilde and the so-called "decadent" poets, had emphasised "art for art's sake" and rejected Victorian moral didacticism. This period also saw the rise of the "fin de siècle" sensibility, characterised by a sense of world-

weariness, sophistication, and sometimes morbidity. The poetry of the 1890s often displayed an urban focus, elaborate vocabulary, and complex metrical patterns.

Parallel to these developments, the Celtic Revival (or Celtic Twilight) Movement, associated with William Butler Yeats and others, sought to revive interest in Celtic myths, legends, and folklore. This movement represented an early attempt to find poetic inspiration in native traditions rather than classical or continental sources—a precursor to the Georgians' interest in specifically English landscapes and traditions.

By the early 1900s, some poets were already seeking alternatives to Victorian conventions. Thomas Hardy, who had abandoned novel-writing for poetry after the controversial reception of "Jude the Obscure," was developing a stark, pessimistic poetic voice that would influence younger poets. A.E. Housman's "A Shropshire Lad" (1896) demonstrated how simple language could convey profound emotions, while the nature poetry of Gerald Manley Hopkins (though largely unpublished until 1918) explored innovative rhythms and compressed language.

Against this backdrop, a new generation of poets began to emerge who would seek a middle path between Victorian traditionalism and radical experimentation. They would find their collective voice in what came to be known as Georgian Poetry.

13.6 THE EMERGENCE OF GEORGIAN POETRY

The dawn of the Twentieth Century marked a period of significant transition in British society. The Victorian Era had ended with Queen Victoria's death in 1901, and the brief Edwardian period (1901-1910) gave way to the Georgian Era with the coronation of King George V in 1910. These years witnessed dramatic social, political, and technological changes that would transform Britain and influence its literary landscape.

The late Victorian and Edwardian Periods had been characterised by imperial expansion, increasing industrialisation, and growing social tensions. The certainties of Victorian society were being challenged by new political movements, including socialism, feminism, and Irish nationalism. The Labor Party was founded in 1900, and the suffragette movement was gaining momentum in its fight for women's voting rights. Meanwhile, the British Empire reached its territorial peak, covering nearly a quarter of the world's land surface and ruling over 458 million people.

Technological innovations were rapidly changing everyday life. The first automobiles appeared on British roads, electric lighting was becoming more common in urban areas, and new forms of mass communication and entertainment, such as cinema, were emerging. Yet alongside these modern developments, significant portions of Britain remained rural and traditional, creating a stark contrast between old and new ways of life that would find expression in Georgian Poetry.

The Georgian Poetry Movement coalesced around Edward Marsh (1872-1953), a civil servant, patron of the arts, and private secretary to Winston Churchill. Marsh was well-connected in London's literary circles and became a crucial facilitator for young poets seeking publication and recognition. In 1911, Marsh became acquainted with Rupert Brooke, a charismatic young poet whose work he greatly admired. Through Brooke, Marsh was introduced to other promising poets, including John Drinkwater, W.H. Davies, Walter de la Mare, and James Elroy Flecker. Marsh recognised that these poets shared certain aesthetic sensibilities and saw an opportunity to promote their work collectively.

The result was the first anthology titled "Georgian Poetry 1911-1912," published by Harold Monro's Poetry Bookshop in December 1912. Monro was himself a poet and an important figure in

literary London, having founded the Poetry Review and established the Poetry Bookshop as a venue for readings and a center for poetic activity. The bookshop, located in Bloomsbury, became an important meeting place for Georgian poets and other literary figures.

The anthology's title explicitly connected the featured poets with the new reign of King George V, suggesting a fresh start in English poetry. In his preface, Marsh wrote that the collection aimed to represent "the characteristic productions of the younger generation." The anthology included work by seventeen poets and was an immediate commercial success, selling several thousand copies—an exceptional figure for a poetry collection at that time.

Four more anthologies followed under the same title: "Georgian Poetry 1913-1915" (published in 1915), "Georgian Poetry 1916-1917" (1917), "Georgian Poetry 1918-1919" (1919), and "Georgian Poetry 1920-1922" (1922). Each volume introduced new poets while continuing to feature established Georgian voices. Over time, the roster expanded to include figures such as D.H. Lawrence, Siegfried Sassoon, Robert Graves, and Edmund Blunden, among others.

The Georgian anthologies initially represented a broad church of poetic styles united by certain general principles rather than a rigid manifesto. As Marsh stated in his preface to the first anthology, the collection aimed to demonstrate that "English poetry is now once again putting on a new strength and beauty." This was not a revolutionary movement seeking to overthrow tradition but rather one attempting to revitalise English poetry through clarity, sincerity, and direct engagement with contemporary life.

13.7 CHARACTERISTICS OF GEORGIAN POETRY

Georgian poetry is characterised by several distinctive features that set it apart from both its Victorian predecessors and its Modernist successors. At its core, Georgian poetry sought to achieve clarity, simplicity, and directness in both language and form. Unlike the elaborate diction and rhetorical flourishes of late Victorian verse, Georgian poems typically employed straightforward language accessible to the average reader. This directness reflected a desire to revitalise English poetry by stripping away what many Georgians viewed as artificial or overwrought elements.

In terms of form, Georgian poets generally worked within traditional structures rather than pursuing radical experimentation. They favoured established metrical patterns and stanza forms, though often with a lighter touch than their Victorian predecessors. While they did not abandon rhyme schemes and regular meters, they tended to deploy these elements with greater flexibility and naturalness. The result was poetry that maintained connections to traditional forms while avoiding the rigidity that could make such forms seem archaic or constrained.

Clarity of image was another hallmark of Georgian poetry. Rather than relying on abstract concepts or complex symbolism, Georgian poets typically presented concrete, vivid images drawn from direct observation. This emphasis on clear imagery represented a move away from the allegorical tendencies of some Victorian poetry and anticipated the Imagist Movement that would emerge as part of literary modernism. However, unlike the imagists, Georgian poets typically embedded their images within narrative or descriptive frameworks rather than presenting them in isolation.

Georgian poetry is also notable for its emotional restraint. While Victorian poetry often displayed heightened emotional expression, Georgian poets generally preferred a more measured approach to feeling. This restraint did not imply emotional coldness but rather a preference for suggestion over declaration, for understatement over effusion. Emotions in Georgian poetry typically emerge through concrete details and situations rather than through explicit statements or exclamations.

Georgian poetry's approach to language represents one of its most distinctive features and a significant departure from late Victorian conventions. Georgian poets typically favored clear, straightforward diction over the ornate vocabulary and rhetorical flourishes that characterised much Victorian verse. This preference for simplicity reflected both aesthetic principles and democratic impulses—a desire to make poetry accessible to a broader audience while maintaining its artistic integrity.

Unlike Victorian poets who often employed archaic or elevated language to create a sense of poetic distinction, Georgian poets generally used contemporary English, including colloquial expressions when appropriate. This linguistic approach reflected their commitment to poetry that engaged directly with modern experience rather than retreating into artificial literary realms. John Masefield's "The Everlasting Mercy," with its use of rural dialect and even occasional profanity, exemplifies this democratic approach to poetic language.

Georgian poets paid particular attention to precision in diction, selecting words for their accuracy rather than ornamental qualities. Edward Thomas's poetry demonstrates this precision, with carefully chosen adjectives that capture exact visual, auditory, or tactile qualities rather than imposing conventional poetic associations. In "Tall Nettles," Thomas describes nettles "with paler ones and higher / And flowery, taller thistles" – simple language that precisely registers subtle distinctions in color and height.

This emphasis on precision relates to the imagistic quality of much Georgian poetry. While generally not adopting the radical compression advocated by Ezra Pound and the Imagist Movement, Georgian poets often created vivid images through careful observation and exact description. Isaac Rosenberg's "Break of Day in the Trenches," with its precise rendering of a rat "strong in death," demonstrates how this imagistic precision could serve powerful emotional and thematic purposes even in traditional poetic structures.

The Georgian approach to language allowed for emotional expression without excessive sentimentality or rhetorical display. Feelings typically emerge through concrete details and situations rather than abstract statements or exclamations. This emotional restraint, which parallels certain modernist values despite different formal strategies, helped Georgian Poetry avoid the effusiveness sometimes associated with Victorian verse while maintaining poetry's capacity for emotional resonance.

Georgian poets' language choices were not merely matters of style but reflected deeper ethical and philosophical commitments. Their preference for clear, precise language embodied values of honesty, attentiveness, and respect for ordinary experience. By avoiding linguistic ostentation or obfuscation, they sought to create poetry that honored the dignity of common things and everyday people—values that remained relevant even as literary fashion shifted toward modernist complexity.

Georgian poetry's approach to meter and form reflects its transitional position between Victorian tradition and modernist innovation. While Georgian poets generally worked within established formal structures rather than pursuing radical experimentation, they often modified traditional patterns to create greater flexibility and naturalness of expression.

Most Georgian poets employed regular metrical schemes, including iambic pentameter, tetrameter, and other conventional patterns. However, they typically handled these meters with a lighter touch than their Victorian predecessors, allowing for more variation and a closer approximation of natural speech rhythms. This flexible approach to meter created poetry that

maintained formal coherence while avoiding the rigid regularity that could make Victorian verse seem artificial or constrained.

Edward Thomas's poetry exemplifies this flexible approach to meter. While often working in loose iambic patterns, Thomas varies his line lengths and stress patterns to create rhythms that capture the cadences of conversational speech. In "Adlestrop," the variable stresses and subtle pauses mirror the tentative process of recollection described in the poem: "Yes, I remember Adlestrop— / The name, because one afternoon / Of heat the express-train drew up there / Unwontedly. It was late June."

Stanza forms in Georgian poetry show similar flexibility within traditional frameworks. Georgian poets employed a range of stanza patterns, from simple quatrains to more complex forms, but generally avoided the elaborate stanzaic structures favoured by some Victorian poets. This preference for straightforward stanza forms aligned with Georgian poetry's emphasis on clarity and accessibility while providing sufficient structure for formal coherence.

The sonnet remained popular among Georgian poets, with Rupert Brooke's war sonnets representing perhaps the most famous examples. However, Georgian sonnets often display subtle variations on traditional Petrarchan or Shakespearean patterns, adapting these historical forms to contemporary sensibilities. Siegfried Sassoon's war sonnets, for instance, maintain the fourteen-lines structure but often modify conventional rhyme schemes and Volta placements to serve their satirical or polemical purposes.

Narrative and dramatic forms were particularly important in Georgian poetry. Poets like John Masefield, Gordon Bottomley, and Wilfrid Gibson developed extended narrative poems that combined traditional metrical patterns with realistic dialogue and contemporary settings. These longer forms allowed Georgian poets to explore character and situation in ways that anticipated certain modern approaches while maintaining connections to older poetic traditions.

While free verse was not central to Georgian practice, some poets associated with the movement experimented with non-metrical forms. D.H. Lawrence, whose work appeared in Georgian anthologies despite his growing distance from the movement's mainstream, developed a flexible free verse style in collections like "Look! We Have Come Through!" (1917). Isaac Rosenberg, similarly, combined metrical patterns with freer rhythms in his war poetry, creating a distinctive voice that transcends simple categorisation.

This formal approach—maintaining connections to tradition while introducing greater flexibility and naturalness—represents one of Georgian poetry's lasting contributions to English verse. By demonstrating how traditional forms could accommodate modern sensibilities without complete rejection of historical resources, Georgian poets created a bridge between Victorian and modernist practice that remains valuable for understanding poetic development in the Twentieth Century.

Georgian poetry's approach to imagery and symbolism represents another area where the movement balanced tradition and innovation. While generally avoiding the complex symbolic systems of modernist poetry, Georgian poets developed distinctive ways of using concrete images to suggest larger meanings without sacrificing clarity or immediate accessibility.

Natural imagery dominates Georgian poetry, with precise observations of plants, animals, weather patterns, and landscapes serving both descriptive and suggestive purposes. Unlike some Victorian nature poetry, which often subordinated natural details to moral or spiritual lessons, Georgian poetry typically presents nature on its own terms, allowing symbolic resonances to emerge organically rather than imposing them through explicit statement.

Edward Thomas's "The Owl," for instance, describes a winter night encounter with an owl using precise sensory details: "The frost was on the moon: / The owl hallooed clear and strong: / 'Holloa, holloa, holloa! Sang out the owl to me / So tremulous, so long." These concrete details create an atmosphere of mystery and isolation without explicit interpretation, allowing readers to feel the emotional significance without having it explained.

Georgian poets often used symbolic landscapes—places that suggest psychological or spiritual states while remaining vividly physical. Walter de la Mare's mysterious houses, Thomas's country roads, and Masefield's seascapes function as physical settings and emotional terrain. This technique creates poetry that works simultaneously at literal and symbolic levels without requiring specialized knowledge or elaborate interpretive frameworks.

Animal imagery appears frequently in Georgian poetry, often suggesting connections between human and non-human consciousness. Ralph Hodgson's "The Bull" uses its animal protagonist to explore themes of age, memory, and dignity that transcend species boundaries. Similarly, many Georgian war poems use animals—rats, birds, horses—as figures that move between opposed human realms, suggesting perspectives outside human conflict.

Seasonal imagery provides another important symbolic resource in Georgian poetry. The cycle of seasons, with its patterns of growth, harvest, and dormancy, offers Georgian poets a framework for exploring themes of transience, renewal, and mortality. Edward Thomas's "Early one morning in May I set out," with its vibrant spring scenery set against awareness of death, exemplifies this seasonal symbolism, as does Rupert Brooke's use of autumn imagery in "The Old Vicarage, Grantchester" to suggest both abundance and impending loss.

Memory as imagery represents a distinctive feature of Georgian poetry, particularly in work written during and after the World War I. Poets like Sassoon, Graves, and Blunden developed techniques for presenting remembered scenes with hallucinatory vividness, creating juxtapositions between past and present that suggest psychological complexities without explicit analysis. This approach to memory-as-image anticipates later developments in English poetry while maintaining Georgian clarity and concreteness.

13.8 THEMES IN GEORGIAN POETRY

Several recurring themes distinguish Georgian poetry, with a pronounced emphasis on the English countryside and rural life standing as perhaps its most recognisable feature. Georgian poets frequently celebrated the landscapes, traditions, and rhythms of rural England, depicting villages, fields, woods, and country lanes with affection and detailed observation. This focus reflected both a genuine appreciation for rural beauty and a response to increasing urbanisation and industrialisation, which threatened traditional ways of life.

Nature imagery permeates Georgian poetry, with careful attention to flora, fauna, and seasonal changes. Birds, trees, flowers, and weather patterns are rendered with precision and sensitivity, often serving as connections to deeper emotional or philosophical concerns. This close observation of natural details reflects the influence of earlier nature poets like Wordsworth while anticipating the detailed natural imagery of later Twentieth- Century poets such as Ted Hughes.

Another significant theme in Georgian poetry is the experience of ordinary people. Georgian poets showed interest in the lives, work, and speech of farmers, labourers, sailors, and other everyday figures. This democratic impulse represented a departure from Victorian poetry's frequent focus on heroic, mythological, or aristocratic subjects. Poets like Wilfrid Gibson specialised in portraying working-class characters with empathy and authenticity, while W.H. Davies drew on his experiences as a tramp to depict life on society's margins.

Georgian poetry also engaged with contemporary concerns, though often indirectly. The anxieties of modern life appear as undercurrents in many Georgian poems, manifesting in themes of transience, loss, and the search for meaning in a changing world. While Georgian poetry is sometimes criticised for avoiding direct engagement with social and political issues, closer reading reveals subtle responses to modernity's challenges, particularly in poems written during and after the World War I.

The experience of war became an increasingly important theme in later Georgian poetry. The First World War had a profound impact on many Georgian poets, several of whom served in the conflict. Rupert Brook's patriotic sonnets, written early in the war, exemplify an initial idealistic response, while later war poems by Siegfried Sassoon, Robert Graves, and Edmund Blunden reflect a growing disillusionment with the conflict's brutal realities. These war poems, with their combination of traditional forms and stark modern content, represent some of Georgian poetry's most enduring contributions. Thus, Georgian Poetry represents a bridge between the Victorian Era and modernism, retaining some of the romantic sensibility of the past while also embracing a more accessible and personal style.

13.9 PERTINENCE TO LITERARY MODERNISM

Georgian poetry's relationship to modernism is complex and often misunderstood. Rather than standing in simple opposition to modernist innovations, Georgian poetry existed on a continuum with modernism, with significant overlaps and interactions between the movements. Many poets published in both Georgian anthologies and modernist journals, and several poets who began as Georgians later embraced aspects of modernism.

While modernist poets like T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound advocated for radical formal experimentation and engaged directly with urban alienation and cultural fragmentation, Georgian poets typically preferred evolutionary rather than revolutionary approaches to poetic innovation. This difference in approach led to tensions between the movements, with modernist critics often dismissing Georgian poetry as backward-looking or provincial.

However, this characterisation oversimplifies the relationship between Georgian and modernist poetry. Both movements sought to revitalise English poetry by finding alternatives to late Victorian conventions, though they pursued this goal through different strategies. Georgian poetry's emphasis on clear imagery, precise observation, and everyday language paralleled some modernist concerns, even as Georgian poets generally maintained stronger connections to traditional forms and pastoral themes.

The boundaries between Georgian and modernist poetry were permeable. D.H. Lawrence, for instance, appeared in Georgian anthologies but developed a poetic voice that many consider modernist in its psychological intensity and formal innovations. Similarly, Isaac Rosenberg, whose work was included in Georgian anthologies posthumously, created poetry that combined Georgian directness with modernist fragmentation and intensity.

By the early 1920s, modernism was gaining ascendancy in critical discourse, and Georgian poetry increasingly became defined in opposition to modernist approaches. This oppositional framing, while oversimplified, contributed to Georgian poetry's declining reputation as the decade progressed. Nevertheless, Georgian poetry represented an important transitional moment in English literary history, preserving certain valuable aspects of tradition while responding to modernising impulses.

13.10 MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS

13.10.1 Edward Marsh (1872-1953)

Edward Marsh was more than just the editor of the Georgian Poetry anthologies; he was the movement's chief architect and champion. A Cambridge-educated civil servant who served as Winston Churchill's private secretary for many years, Marsh was also a passionate advocate for the arts. His personal tastes leaned toward accessible, well-crafted poetry rather than radical experimentation, and he used his considerable influence to promote poets whose work he admired.

Marsh's role as an editor of the Georgian Poetry anthologies was crucial to the movement's cohesion and public recognition. He selected the poets for inclusion, arranged the poems, and wrote prefaces that helped define the anthologies' purpose and aesthetic orientation. Through these anthologies, Marsh created a platform for emerging poets who might otherwise have struggled to find publishers for their work.

Beyond his editorial role, Marsh provided personal and financial support to many Georgian poets. He helped secure Rupert Brooke's reputation by editing his collected poems after Brooke's death in 1915 and played a similar role for other poets. His London home became a gathering place for writers, artists, and intellectuals, fostering connections that enriched the Georgian Movement.

Marsh's own literary output included translations from French and Latin, as well as a memoir titled "A Number of People" (1939) that provides valuable insights into literary London during the Georgian era. While his editorial judgment has sometimes been questioned, particularly regarding his reluctance to embrace more experimental poetry, Marsh's dedication to promoting the work of young poets had a lasting impact on English literature.

13.10.2 Rupert Brooke (1887-1915)

Rupert Brooke is perhaps the most famous of the Georgian poets, though his early death during the World War I means his body of work is relatively small. Handsome, charismatic, and highly educated, Brooke became something of a celebrity in his lifetime and achieved posthumous iconic status as a symbol of the generation sacrificed in the war.

Brooke's poetry combines traditional forms with fresh language and imagery. His early work, collected in "Poems" (1911), explores themes of love, nature, and the complexities of modern life. Poems like "The Old Vicarage, Grantchester" (1912) exemplify his gift for evoking the English countryside with both precision and nostalgic affection. This poem's famous line, "stands the Church clock at ten to three? / And is there honey still for tea?" has become emblematic of a certain idealised vision of Pre-war England.

In 1913, Brooke traveled to the South Seas, an experience that inspired some of his most innovative poems, including "Tiare Tahiti" and "The Great Lover." The latter poem, with its ecstatic catalog of everyday sensory experiences "from the strong cider of the autumn take / To the white winter of the shaven sea," demonstrates Brooke's ability to find profound significance in ordinary things.

Brooke's most widely known works are the five sonnets collectively titled "1914," written shortly after the outbreak of the World War I. These poems, especially "The Soldier" with its opening lines "If I should die, think only this of me: / That there's some corner of a foreign field / That is forever England," express a patriotic idealism that resonated powerfully with the British public in the war's early stages. When Brooke died of sepsis, en route (on the way), to the Dardanelles campaign in April 1915, he was transformed into a national symbol of beautiful youth sacrificed for the country.

Later critics would question both the literary value of Brooke's war sonnets and the ideological assumptions underlying them. Nevertheless, his influence on Georgian poetry was significant. His technical skill, his ability to blend traditional forms with contemporary sensibilities, and his commitment to accessible but meaningful poetry exemplified the Georgian ideal. Moreover, his friendship with Edward Marsh helped catalyse the Georgian Movement itself.

13.10.3 Walter de la Mare (1873-1956)

Walter de la Mare stands as one of the most distinctive and enduring voices among the Georgian poets. His work spans poetry, short stories, and novels, but it is for his poetry that he remains best known. Unlike many Georgian poets who emphasised clarity and directness, de la Mare cultivated a style characterised by mystery, suggestiveness, and hauntingly musical language.

De la Mare's first significant collection, "The Listeners and Other Poems" (1912), established his poetic voice and introduced themes that would preoccupy him throughout his career. The title poem, with its mysterious traveler encountering "a host of phantom listeners" in an abandoned house, exemplifies his ability to create atmospheric, dream-like scenarios that linger in the reader's imagination. This poem, with its blend of narrative clarity and metaphysical ambiguity, remains one of the most anthologised works of Georgian poetry.

Childhood is a recurring theme in de la Mare's poetry. Collections like "Peacock Pie" (1913) contain numerous poems that capture the wonder, fear, and imaginative intensity of childhood experience. These poems avoid sentimentality through their psychological acuity and their recognition of the darker aspects of childhood imagination. De la Mare's children's poetry, like his adult verse, often explores boundaries between reality and fantasy, wakefulness and dreaming.

De la Mare's technical mastery is evident in his skillful use of meter, rhyme, and sound patterns to create musical effects that enhance his poems' dreamlike quality. His language, while accessible, is carefully chosen for its sonic properties and suggestive power. This musicality made many of his poems particularly suitable for reading aloud, contributing to their popularity.

While de la Mare is often categorised as a Georgian poet due to his inclusion in the anthologies and his use of traditional forms, his work transcends simple classification. His exploration of psychological states, his interest in the supernatural, and his creation of symbolic landscapes connect him to symbolism and even surrealism. His influence extended to later poets like W.H. Auden, who admired his unique combination of technical skill and imaginative vision.

13.10.4 John Masefield (1878-1967)

John Masefield brought to Georgian poetry a vigorous narrative style and a deep connection to maritime life. Having served as a merchant sailor in his youth, Masefield drew on these experiences to create poems that captured the adventure, hardship, and beauty of life at sea. His appointment as Poet Laureate in 1930 confirmed his status as one of the most significant English poets of his generation.

Masefield's breakthrough came with "The Everlasting Mercy" (1911), a long narrative poem that tells the story of Saul Kane, a dissolute village character who undergoes a spiritual transformation. Written in accessible language and featuring realistic dialogue, this poem represented a departure from more genteel poetic conventions. Its frank depiction of rural life and its use of colloquial speech align with Georgian poetry's democratic impulses.

"Salt-Water Ballads" (1902) and "Ballads" (1903) established Masefield's reputation as a poet of the sea. These collections include "Sea Fever," with its famous opening line "I must go

down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky," which has entered popular consciousness as an expression of wanderlust and maritime yearning. Masefield's sea poems combine technical knowledge of sailing with an almost mystical appreciation for the ocean's power and beauty.

In longer narrative works like "Dauber" (1913) and "Reynard the Fox" (1919), Masefield demonstrated his ability to sustain poetic energy across extended compositions. "Dauber" tells the story of a young painter who goes to sea to gather material for his art, only to meet a tragic end. The poem captures both the physical realities of sailing around Cape Horn and the psychological journey of its protagonist. "Reynard the Fox," a vivid depiction of an English fox hunt, showcases Masefield's detailed knowledge of rural traditions and his skill in portraying landscapes and communities.

Masefield's contributions to Georgian poetry include his narrative drive, his use of colloquial language, and his democratisation of poetic subjects. He helped expand the range of experiences and characters considered suitable for serious poetry, bringing working-class figures and their language into literary focus. While his reputation has fluctuated over time, the directness and vigour of his best work continue to find admirers.

13.10.5 W.H. Davies (1871-1940)

William Henry Davies brought to Georgian poetry an authenticity, born of unconventional life experience. Having spent years as a tramp in the United Kingdom and the United States before losing a leg while attempting to hop a train, Davies drew on his experiences of poverty, wandering, and close observation of nature to create poetry marked by simplicity, directness, and unsentimental appreciation of beauty.

Davies came to public attention with the publication of "The Autobiography of a Super-Tramp" (1908), a memoir recounting his years of wandering and hardship. This was followed by several collections of poetry, including "The Soul's Destroyer and Other Poems" (1905), "New Poems" (1907), and "Nature Poems and Others" (1908). His work attracted the support of influential figures, including George Bernard Shaw, who wrote a preface for his autobiography.

Davies's most famous poem, "Leisure," with its memorable opening lines "What is this life if, full of care, / We have no time to stand and stare," captures his characteristic concerns. The poem advocates for mindful attention to natural beauty and criticises the hurried pace of modern life that prevents such appreciation. This theme of attentiveness to nature's details recurs throughout Davies's work, reflecting his belief that direct observation of the natural world offers a path to joy and meaning.

Unlike many Georgian poets, Davies did not come from privileged backgrounds or receive formal higher education. His language is notably simple, sometimes approaching the quality of folk poetry or nursery rhymes. Yet this simplicity should not be mistaken for lack of craft; Davies carefully honed his verses to achieve maximum clarity and impact with minimal rhetorical flourish.

Davies's poetry is characterised by brevity, clear imagery, and often a gentle humour. His poems typically focus on concrete experiences and observations rather than abstract concepts. This grounding in direct experience gives his work an authenticity that resonated with readers seeking alternatives to what some perceived as the artificiality of late Victorian verse.

While Davies's work is sometimes dismissed as overly simple or naive, closer examination reveals subtle craftsmanship and genuine insight. His ability to find profound significance in ordinary experiences and natural phenomena exemplifies the Georgian commitment to revitalising English poetry through direct engagement with the contemporary world.

13.10.6 Siegfried Sassoon (1886-1967)

Siegfried Sassoon represents one of the most interesting trajectories within Georgian poetry, as his work evolved from genteel nature lyrics to some of the most powerful and bitter war poetry of the First World War. This evolution makes him a pivotal figure in understanding how the Georgian movement responded to the cataclysmic events of 1914-1918.

Sassoon's early poetry, collected in volumes such as "The Old Huntsman" (1917), includes pastoral poems that celebrate the English countryside and rural traditions, particularly fox-hunting, which Sassoon had enjoyed as a privileged young man. These early poems, with their celebration of nature and traditional rural pursuits, align closely with typical Georgian themes and styles.

The outbreak of the World War I initially prompted Sassoon to enlist with patriotic enthusiasm. However, his experiences in the trenches, where he earned a reputation for bravery (earning the nickname "Mad Jack" for his daring raids) led to a profound transformation in his outlook and his poetry. Witnessing the war's carnage firsthand, Sassoon began to write poems that expressed rage at the conflict's futility and the complacency of civilians and military leaders who supported its continuation.

Poems like "The General," "Base Details," and "They" use savage irony to condemn military incompetence and civilian ignorance. "Suicide in the Trenches" contrasts the simple joy of a young soldier before the war with his desperate suicide under the pressures of trench life, concluding with a bitter address to civilians who "cheer when soldier lads march by" but "sneak home and pray you'll never know / The hell where youth and laughter go."

Sassoon's war poetry maintains certain Georgian characteristics—clear language, traditional forms, narrative elements—but deploys these features to express decidedly un-Georgian sentiments of rage, disillusionment, and protest. His work demonstrates how Georgian poetic techniques could be adapted to confront modern horrors rather than retreat from them.

In 1917, Sassoon made his opposition to the war public by issuing "A Soldier's Declaration," refusing to return to duty after convalescent leave and stating that the war was being "deliberately prolonged by those who have the power to end it." This act of protest led to his being sent to Craig Lockhart War Hospital, where he met and influenced Wilfred Owen, another significant war poet.

Sassoon's evolution from Georgian nature poet to fierce critic of war reflects broader tensions within the Georgian movement as it confronted the realities of modern warfare. His work demonstrates that Georgian poetry, despite its pastoral inclinations, could adopt to address contemporary crisis when wielded by poets of sufficient moral courage and artistic skill.

13.11 OTHER NOTABLE GEORGIAN POETS

The Georgian movement encompassed a diverse range of poetic voices beyond the figures discussed above. Several other poets made significant contributions to the movement and deserve recognition for their distinctive work.

13.11.1 Lascelles Abercrombie (1881-1938)

He was not only a poet but also an influential critic who helped articulate the theoretical underpinnings of Georgian poetry. His own verse, including "Interludes and Poems" (1908) and "Emblems of Love" (1912), often take the form of dramatic dialogues or philosophical meditations. As one of the movement's intellectual leaders, Abercrombie helped establish the Dymock

community in Gloucestershire, where several Georgian poets (including Rupert Brooke and Wilfrid Gibson) lived briefly before the World War I.

13.11.2 Wilfrid Gibson (1878-1962)

Gibson focused primarily on depicting the lives of working-class people, particularly in his native Northumberland. Collections like "Livelihood: Dramatic Reveries of Labouring Life" (1917) feature dramatic monologues and narratives that capture the hardships, dignities, and small joys of ordinary people's experiences. Gibson's work exemplifies the democratic impulse within Georgian poetry, expanding the range of subjects considered suitable for poetic treatment.

13.11.3 D.H. Lawrence (1885-1930)

Though better known for his novels, was featured in Georgian anthologies and shared certain Georgian concerns, particularly regarding the relationship between humans and the natural world. His poetry, however, generally displays greater psychological intensity and formal experimentation than typical Georgian verse. Collections like "Love Poems and Others" (1913) and "Amores" (1916) reveal his distinctive voice, which would continue to evolve throughout his career.

13.11.4 Gordon Bottomley (1874-1948)

Specialised in verse dramas drawing on folklore, history, and legend. Works like "The Crier by Night" (1902) and "King Lear's Wife" (1915) demonstrate his interest in reinterpreting historical and legendary material through a contemporary lens. Bottomley maintained a significant correspondence with other Georgian poets, particularly Edward Thomas, and remained committed to the movement's principles even as its popularity waned.

13.11.5 Ralph Hodgson (1871-1962)

He wrote compact, imagistic poems that often focused on animals and their relationship to humans. His best-known poem, "The Bull," depicts an aging bull remembering his former power, creating a poignant meditation on age and decline. Hodgson's precise observations of animals align with Georgian interests in nature, while his symbolic uses of animal figures sometimes anticipate later developments in English poetry.

13.11.6 Harold Monro (1879-1932)

In addition to running the Poetry Bookshop that published the Georgian anthologies, was himself a poet of considerable talent. His work often addresses modern urban experiences with a combination of precision and wistfulness. "Dogs," which imaginatively enters the consciousness of domestic canines, exemplifies his ability to make the familiar seem strange and the ordinary appear profound.

13.11.7 Edward Thomas (1878-1917)

Though initially reluctant to consider himself a poet, created during his brief poetic career (1914-1917) a body of work that has grown increasingly appreciated over time. Encouraged by Robert Frost, Thomas wrote poems characterised by conversational rhythms, precise observations of the English countryside, and subtle explorations of psychological states. Poems like "Adlestrop," which describes a brief train stop in a country station, capture fleeting moments with remarkable immediacy. Thomas's death in action at the Battle of Arras in 1917 cut short a poetic career of great promise.

These and other Georgian poets created a diverse body of work united by certain general principles rather than narrow stylistic prescriptions. Their collective output demonstrates that

Georgian poetry encompassed a wider range of themes, techniques, and perspectives than is sometimes acknowledged in literary histories that emphasise the movement's more conservative aspects.

13.12 IMAGISM

At the dawn of the 20th Century, as Victorian sensibilities gave way to modernist experimentation, a small but influential poetic movement emerged that would fundamentally alter the landscape of English-language poetry. Imagism, though short-lived as a formal movement (roughly 1912-1917), represented a radical break from the ornate, sentimental, and often verbose poetry of the late 19th Century. With its emphasis on clarity, precision, and economy of language, Imagism helped establish the foundations for modernist poetry and continues to influence poetic practice to this day.

The Imagist Movement can be understood as both a reaction against and an evolution of existing poetic traditions. It rejected the flowery language and conventional sentiments of Victorian poetry while drawing inspiration from classical Greek lyrics, Japanese haiku, and French Symbolism. The movement's driving principle was to present an "image"—a precise visual impression—with fresh, direct language, free from unnecessary ornamentation. This deceptively simple aim would prove revolutionary in its effects.

The story of Imagism is not merely a tale of literary innovation but also one of complex personalities, contentious relationships, and the broader cultural and intellectual currents of the early 20th Century. As we shall see, the movement's internal tensions and the external pressures of a world entering the chaos of the World War I would eventually lead to its fragmentation. Yet its aesthetic principles would endure, dispersed into the broader streams of modernist poetry and continuing to shape poetic practice throughout the 20th Century and beyond.

13.12.1 Imagism: History and Influences

The intellectual foundations of Imagism were laid in the first decade of the 20th Century, particularly through the philosopher T.E. Hulme and his involvement with the Poets' Club in London. Hulme, dissatisfied with the romantic excesses of Victorian poetry, sought a more austere and precise poetic language. He found inspiration in the work of French Symbolist poets, particularly the precision and restraint of poets like Stephane Mallarme, but wanted to move beyond what he perceived as their obscurity toward greater clarity. In his 1908 lecture "Romanticism and Classicism," Hulme articulated his vision for a new "classical" poetry that would be "dry and hard," emphasising precision and concrete imagery rather than abstractions and emotions. He argued that poetry should not attempt to express the infinite or transcendent (as in Romanticism) but should instead acknowledge human limitations and focus on presenting the concrete world with accuracy and freshness. Hulme's ideas found fertile ground in the intellectual climate of pre-war London, which was buzzing with new philosophical currents. The influence of philosophers like Henri Bergson, with his emphasis on direct experience and intuition, and the growing interest in Eastern philosophies, particularly Zen Buddhism with its focus on direct perception, provided a receptive context for Hulme's poetic theories.

Another crucial influence on the development of Imagist poetics was the growing Western awareness of Japanese poetic forms, particularly haiku and tanka. Both are traditional Japanese poetic forms, but they differ in length and structure. Haiku is a three-line poem with a 5-7-5 syllable structure, while tanka is a five-line poem with a 5-7-5-7-7 syllable structure. Tanka is considered an older form, while haiku gained popularity later, particularly in the 17$^{th\ Century}$. These forms, with their emphasis on concision, precision, and the presentation of vivid images without commentary,

offered a model for the kind of poetry that Hulme and, later, Pound were advocating. The publication of translations of Japanese poetry in the early 20th Century, including works by Ernest Fenollosa that would later be edited by Pound, helped introduce these Eastern aesthetic principles to Western poets. Simultaneously, there was a renewed interest in classical Greek and Roman poetry, particularly the lyric poetry of Sappho and the epigrammatic quality of Latin verse. Hulme, Pound, and H.D. were all deeply versed in classical literature, and they found in these ancient forms an alternative to the ornate Victorian tradition—a model of poetry that could be direct, sensuous, and precise without being emotionally effusive.

13.12.2 The Poets' Club

The practical manifestation of these ideas began to take shape through Hulme's involvement with the Poets' Club, founded in London in 1908. Though this group's activities were not explicitly aligned with what would later be called Imagism, they represented an important transitional phase. The club included poets like F.S. Flint, who would later become associated with Imagism, and it provided a forum for the discussion of new poetic theories and practices. Hulme's own poetry, though limited in quantity, embodied his theoretical principles. Poems such as "Autumn" and "Above the Dock" presented clear and concrete images with minimal commentary, avoiding both rhyme and regular meter in favor of a more natural cadence. While these poems might seem unremarkable to modern readers accustomed to free verse, in their historical context, they represented a significant departure from prevailing poetic norms.

The next crucial development came with the arrival of Ezra Pound in London in 1908. Pound, already committed to poetic innovation, quickly became involved in London's literary circles. By 1909, he had connected with Hulme and the Poets' Club, though he would soon break away to form his own group. Pound's poetic development during this period showed a progressive movement toward greater precision and concision, culminating in his 1912 poem "In a Station of the Metro," which would become an iconic example of Imagist technique. This pre-history of Imagism demonstrates that the movement did not emerge ex nihilo but was the culmination of various intellectual and literary currents. The groundwork laid by Hulme and others created the conditions in which Imagism could flourish, providing both theoretical justification and practical examples for the poetic revolution that was to come.

13.12.3 The Final Outcome

While T.E. Hulme had articulated many of the principles that would come to define Imagism, it was Ezra Pound who transformed these ideas into a coherent movement with a defined identity and programme. The formal birth of Imagism as a named movement can be traced to a specific meeting at the British Museum Tea Room in London in 1912, where Pound, H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), and Richard Aldington discussed and refined their shared poetic principles.

H.D. had arrived in London in 1911, following a complex romantic history with Pound (they had been engaged briefly years earlier). When she showed Pound some of her latest poems, he was immediately struck by their clarity, precision, and classical restraint. Famously, he annotated them "H.D. Imagiste" and prepared them for publication in the literary magazine Poetry, edited by Harriet Monroe in Chicago. The publication of these poems in the January 1913 issue of Poetry, alongside works by Aldington under the same "Imagiste" label, marked the first public appearance of Imagism as a distinct movement.

Richard Aldington, who would soon marry H.D., became the third core member of this initial Imagist group. Like H.D., he was deeply influenced by classical Greek poetry and shared the commitment to precision and economy that Pound was advocating. Together, these three poets

formed what has sometimes been called the "Original Imagistes," deliberately using the French spelling to suggest cosmopolitanism and connection to European avant-garde movements.

13.12.4 Defining Principles

The theoretical underpinnings of Imagism were most explicitly articulated in a series of manifestos and statements published between 1913 and 1915. The first of these appeared in Poetry magazine in March 1913, in an article titled "Imagisme" written by F.S. Flint but largely dictated by Pound. This article outlined three key principles:

1. Direct treatment of the "thing," whether subjective or objective.
2. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.
3. Regarding rhythm: to compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in the sequence of a metronome.

These principles emphasised clarity, economy, and a break from traditional metrical forms. The focus was on presenting images directly, without rhetorical excess or artificial rhythmic patterns. Later that same year, Pound expanded on these ideas in his essay "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste," published in Poetry. Here, he offered more specific technical advice, famously defining an image as "that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time." He urged poets to "go in fear of abstractions" and to avoid redundant adjectives, decorative elements, and vague generalities. Instead, he advocated for "hard and clear" language, precision of observation, and technical excellence.

These manifestos established Imagism not merely as a style but as a discipline—a rigorous approach to poetic craft that demanded precision and intensity. The principles they outlined were not entirely novel in themselves, but their explicit formulation and the fervor with which they were promoted helped create a sense of a coherent movement with a clear aesthetic agenda.

13.12.5 Early Publications and Reception

The first substantial collection of Imagist work appeared in the anthology "Des Imagistes", edited by Pound and published in 1914. This volume included works by the core trio of Pound, H.D., and Aldington, as well as contributions from F.S. Flint, Amy Lowell, William Carlos Williams, James Joyce, Ford Madox Ford (then known as Ford Madox Hueffer), and others. The anthology presented Imagism as an international movement with a diverse but coherent body of work, all exemplifying the principles outlined in the manifestos.

Critical reception to early Imagist poetry was mixed. Some critics dismissed these poems as fragmentary or obscure, missing the traditional elements they expected from poetry. Others, particularly those already sympathetic to modernist experimentation, recognized the freshness and intensity that these poems could achieve through their concentration on precise images and economic language. What is clear in retrospect is that even in this early phase, Imagism represented a significant challenge to prevailing poetic norms. By rejecting ornate language, regular meter, and didactic moralizing, Imagist poets were staking a claim for poetry as a modern art form capable of responding to a rapidly changing world. Their emphasis on the image as the primary unit of poetic meaning represented a fundamental shift in how poetry could operate, moving away from discursive statement toward a poetics of presentation and suggestion.

The birth of Imagism thus marked a decisive break in the development of English-language poetry, establishing principles that would influence generations of poets to come. Yet even as the movement was being defined, tensions were emerging that would soon lead to its transformation and eventual dissolution.

13.12.6 Salient Features

At the heart of Imagist practice was a fundamental reorientation of poetic priorities, placing the "image" at the centre of the poem's construction. But what exactly constituted an "image" in Imagist theory? Pound defined it as "that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time"—a definition that suggests something more than simply a visual picture. An Imagist image was a fusion of perception, thought, and feeling, presented with such immediacy and precision that it created a direct impact on the reader. This concept is perfectly illustrated in Pound's iconic two-line poem "In a Station of the Metro" (1913):

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on a wet, black bough.

Here, the juxtaposition of two distinct images—faces in a subway station and flower petals against dark, wet branches—creates a complex impression that is both visual and emotional, connecting urban modernity with natural beauty in a moment of perception. Crucially, the poem doesn't explain this connection or elaborate on its significance; it simply presents the images and allows their juxtaposition to create meaning.

This approach was influenced by Pound's understanding of Chinese and Japanese poetry, particularly his interpretation of the Chinese ideogram (based on Ernest Fenollosa's work) as a method of composition by juxtaposition. Just as Chinese characters combine simpler elements to create meaning, Imagist poems often worked by placing concrete images in relation to each other, allowing their interaction to generate complex responses without need for explanation.

Free Verse and Musical Rhythm

The Imagists' rejection of traditional metrical forms in favor of what Pound called "the sequence of the musical phrase" represented another crucial aspect of their practice. This didn't mean abandoning rhythm altogether but rather developing new rhythmic approaches based on natural speech patterns and musical principles rather than fixed metrical schemes. H.D.'s "Oread" exemplifies this approach to rhythm:

Whirl up, sea— Whirl your pointed pines, Splash your great pines on our rocks, Hurl your green over us, Cover us with your pools of fir.

The poem moves with an urgent, commanding rhythm that mimics the action it describes, without conforming to any traditional metrical pattern. The lines vary in length according to the natural grouping of the phrases, creating a dynamic, organic rhythm that reinforces the poem's evocation of wild natural energy. This approach to rhythm was part of a broader movement toward free verse in early 20th- Century poetry, but the Imagists gave it a particular emphasis and rationale. Their free verse wasn't simply the absence of meter but rather an attempt to develop new rhythmic principles based on musical phrasing and the natural cadences of emphatic speech.

Economy and Precision

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of Imagist practice was its insistence on economy and precision of language. The Imagist manifestos explicitly called for eliminating any word that didn't directly contribute to the presentation, a principle that led to remarkably condensed poems where every word carried maximum weight. This economy is evident in Richard Aldington's "Evening":

The chimneys, rank on rank, Cut the clear sky; The moon, With a rag of gauze about her loins Poses among them, an awkward Venus.

In just five short lines, Aldington creates a vivid urban nocturne, transforming industrial chimneys and the moon into a modern classical tableau. Each word is precisely chosen for its visual accuracy and suggestive power, with no unnecessary elaboration or explanation. This emphasis on economy wasn't merely a stylistic preference but reflected a deeper aesthetic philosophy. The Imagists believed that poetry should present experience directly rather than talking about it, and that this directness required stripping away everything that might come between the reader and the immediate perception of the image. Their practice thus embodied a kind of phenomenological approach to poetry, attempting to capture the world as it is actually experienced rather than as it is conventionally described.

Concrete Particularity

Closely related to the principles of economy and precision was the Imagists' insistence on concrete particularity—their preference for specific, tangible details over abstract statements or generalisations. This emphasis is evident in H.D.'s "Heat":

O wind, rend open the heat, cut apart the heat, rend it to tatters.

Fruit cannot drop through this thick air— fruit cannot fall into heat that presses up and blunts the points of pears and rounds the grapes.

Cut the heat— plough through it, turning it on either side of your path.

Rather than simply stating that it is hot, H.D. presents specific, physically palpable manifestations of heat: air so thick that fruit cannot fall, heat that blunts pear points and rounds grapes. These concrete details make the experience of heat immediately present to the reader in a way that abstract description could not achieve. This commitment to concrete particularity reflected the Imagists' broader rejection of Victorian rhetorical habits, which often relied on abstract language and conventional expressions. Instead, they sought to renew poetic language by grounding it in direct observation and precise rendering of actual things and experiences.

In these various aspects of practice—the focus on the image, the development of free verse rhythms, the emphasis on economy and precision, and the commitment to concrete particularity—the Imagists established a poetic approach that was remarkably influential despite the brevity of the movement itself. Their practical innovations would continue to shape poetic practice long after the movement had dissolved as a formal entity.

13.13 MAJOR IMAGIST WRITERS

13.13.1 Ezra Pound (1885 - 1972)

Though Ezra Pound would eventually move beyond Imagism to develop his more complex ideogrammic method and the epic scope of *The Cantos*, his role in formulating Imagist principles and promoting the movement was crucial. His own Imagist poems exemplify the movement's aesthetics at their most concentrated.

"In a Station of the Metro," represents perhaps the purest example of Imagist technique. Originally a thirty-line poem, Pound relentlessly condensed it to just two lines, creating a work of extraordinary compression and suggestive power. This process of distillation embodies the Imagist commitment to economy and precision. Other notable Imagist works by Pound include "The Return," which evokes classical deities with terse, dynamic language:

See, they return; ah, see the tentative Movements, and the slow feet, The trouble in the pace and the uncertain Wavering!

And “A Girl,” which presents a fleeting impression with characteristic brevity:

The tree has entered my hands, The sap has ascended my arms, The tree has grown in my breast— Downward, The branches grow out of me, like arms.

These poems demonstrate Pound’s ability to create vivid, immediate impressions through careful selection of detail and precise linguistic control. His work during this period established a new standard for poetic concentration that influenced not only his immediate circle but generations of poets to follow.

13.13.2 Hilda Doolittle (1886 - 1961)

If Pound was the theoretician and promoter of Imagism, H.D. was its most perfect practitioner. Her early poems so completely embodied Imagist principles that Pound immediately recognised them as exemplars of the approach he had been advocating. Works such as “Oread,” “Heat,” and “Garden” display a classical purity and precision that became synonymous with Imagist technique. In “Garden,” H.D. transforms a simple description of wind in a fruit garden into a complex study of resistance and resilience:

You are clear O rose, cut in rock, hard as the descent of hail.

I could scrape the colour from the petals like spilt dye from a rock.

If I could break you I could break a tree.

If I could stir I could break a tree— I could break you.

The poem moves from precise observation to emotional intensity through purely imagistic means, without resorting to explanation or abstraction. The hard, clear imagery creates a tension between fragility and strength that resonates beyond the specific scene described. H.D.’s classical influences are evident in poems like “Hermes of the Ways,’ which uses precisely observed coastal imagery to evoke the ancient Greek deity:

The hard sand breaks, and the grains of it are clear as wine.

Far off over the leagues of it, the wind, playing on the wide shore, piles little ridges, and the great waves break over it.

Throughout her early work, H.D. displays an extraordinary ability to fuse sensuous detail with mythic resonance, creating poems that are at once immediate in their sensory impact and profound in their cultural echoes. Though she would later develop a more expansive and mystical poetic approach, her Imagist work remains among the purest expressions of the movement’s aesthetic.

13.13.3 Richard Aldington (1892 – 1962)

Richard Aldington, alongside H.D. (whom he married in 1913) and Pound, formed the original triumvirate of Imagism. His poetry combined classical influences with a distinctly modern sensibility, often juxtaposing ancient and contemporary elements to create striking contrasts.

In “Choricos,” Aldington adapts classical themes to Imagist technique:

The ancient songs pass deathward mournfully.

Cold lips that sing no more, and withered wreaths, regretful eyes, and drooping breasts and wings— symbols of ancient songs, mournfully passing

Down to the great white surges, Watched of none Save the frail sea-birds And the lithe pale girls, Daughters of Okeanos.

The poem evokes classical imagery with modernist economy, creating a sense of timeless melancholy through precisely observed details. Aldington's urban poems, such as "Evening" (quoted earlier), show his ability to apply Imagist techniques to contemporary settings, transforming industrial landscapes with classical allusions. This fusion of ancient and modern sensibilities is characteristic of his contribution to the movement. When the World War I erupted, Aldington served in the trenches, an experience that profoundly affected his later work. The war marked a turning point not only for him personally but for the Imagist movement as a whole, as the catastrophic violence of modern warfare challenged the movement's aesthetic premises.

13.13.4 Amy Lowell (1874 – 1925)

Amy Lowell's role in Imagism was complex and sometimes controversial. Coming from a prominent Boston family, she brought considerable financial resources and organisational energy to the movement after encountering it during a visit to London in 1913. Impressed by the Imagist approach, she quickly began writing in this style and promoting the movement in America. In 1914, after the publication of *Des Imagistes*, tensions developed between Lowell and Pound over the direction of the movement. Pound was already moving toward new interests, particularly Vorticism, while Lowell wanted to continue developing and promoting Imagism. The result was a split, with Lowell taking over leadership of the movement and publishing three annual anthologies titled Some Imagist Poets (1915-1917), which included work by H.D., Aldington, John Gould Fletcher, F.S. Flint, and D.H. Lawrence, but not Pound. Lowell's own Imagist poetry, while sometimes less concentrated than that of H.D. or the early Pound, displayed a vivid sensory immediacy and experimentation with form. In "Red Slippers," she creates a striking visual image with characteristic directness:

Red slippers in a shop-window; and outside in the street, flaws of grey, windy sleet!

Behind the polished glass the slippers hang in long threads of red, threaded with light. They are red, they are grey. They are high-heeled, with long, pointed toes and patent leather vamps. They are the very essence of life.

Her longer poems, such as "Patterns," extended Imagist techniques beyond the brief lyric to create more complex narrative structures while maintaining the movement's emphasis on concrete detail and precise language. While some critics, particularly those aligned with Pound, dismissed Lowell's version of Imagism as diluted or "Amygism," her contribution to the movement's development and dissemination was significant. Through her promotional efforts, publications, and lectures, she brought Imagist principles to a wider audience and helped establish the movement's place in literary history.

13.13.5 William Carlos Williams

William Carlos Williams's relationship with Imagism was tangential but important. Though included in the *Des Imagistes* anthology, he remained somewhat peripheral to the London-centered movement. Nevertheless, the Imagist emphasis on concrete particularity and direct presentation resonated with his own developing poetic approach. Williams's famous dictum "No ideas but in things" echoes Imagist principles, and poems like "The Red Wheelbarrow" display a commitment to precision and concrete imagery that aligns with Imagist practice:

so much depends upon

a red wheel barrow

glazed with rain water

beside the white chickens

The poem presents a simple, vivid image without explanation or commentary, allowing the concrete particulars to carry their own significance.

However, Williams developed these principles in distinctly American directions, focusing on local speech patterns and everyday objects rather than classical allusions or cosmopolitan references. His work formed a bridge between Imagism and later movements such as Objectivism, helping to transplant modernist innovations into specifically American soil.

13.13.6 Other Notable Contributors

Beyond these central figures, several other poets made notable contributions to Imagism or were influenced by its principles:

F.S. Flint, who had been involved with Hulme's Poets' Club, became an important theorist and practitioner of Imagism. His essay "Imagisme," published alongside Pound's "A Few Don'ts" in *Poetry magazine,* helped articulate the movement's principles, and his own poems exemplified its techniques.

John Gould Fletcher, included in Lowell's "Some Imagist Poets" anthologies, brought a distinctive sensibility to the movement, particularly in his "colour symphonies" which applied Imagist techniques to impressionistic sequences of images.

D.H. Lawrence, best known as a novelist, contributed to the "Some Imagist Poets" anthologies with poems that combined Imagist precision with his characteristic intense vitality and connection to natural forces.

Marianne Moore, though not formally associated with the movement, developed a poetic approach that shared Imagism's emphasis on precision, observation, and economy, creating a distinctive voice that would influence American poetry throughout the 20th Century.

T.S. Eliot, while never an Imagist himself, absorbed certain Imagist techniques into his own more complex poetic method. The opening of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" with its stark urban imagery ("When the evening is spread out against the sky / Like a patient etherized upon a table") shows the influence of Imagist approaches, though Eliot would develop these in his own distinctive direction.

These varied contributors and affiliates demonstrate the movement's broad influence even as they highlight its diverse interpretations and applications. Imagism was never a monolithic entity but rather a set of principles that different poets adapted to their own purposes and sensibilities.

Imagism occupies a distinctive place in literary history as a movement that, despite its brief formal existence and limited membership, exercised an influence disproportionate to its size and duration. In its emphasis on precision, economy, and the direct presentation of the image, Imagism articulated principles that would become fundamental to modernist poetics and continue to shape poetic practice into the present day. The movement's significance lies not merely in a collection of individual poems, though many Imagist works remain strikingly fresh and powerful, but in its recalibration of poetic values. By rejecting ornamental language, didactic statement, and conventional metrics in favour of concrete particularity, fresh expression, and organic rhythm, the Imagists helped establish a new conception of what poetry could be and how it could operate. This shift in poetic values did not emerge ex nihilo but reflected broader cultural and intellectual developments of the early 20th Century: the phenomenological turn in philosophy, with its emphasis on direct experience; the move toward abstraction and expressionism in the visual arts; the breakdown of traditional tonality in music; and a general modernist questioning of inherited

forms and conventions. Imagism was the poetic manifestation of these broader currents, giving them specific application in the realm of poetic language and technique.

The movement's transatlantic character and its engagement with diverse cultural traditions—from classical Greek lyrics to Japanese haiku—exemplified the cosmopolitanism that characterized much of modernist art and literature. At the same time, its emphasis on precision and concrete particularity provided a corrective to potential excesses of abstraction or obscurity in modernist experimentation, maintaining a connection to the sensuous, material world even as it challenged conventional modes of representation.

Imagism's gender dynamics, with women poets like H.D. and Amy Lowell playing central roles, distinguished it from many contemporaneous literary movements and contributed to its distinctive character. The prominence of women within Imagism both reflected and contributed to the changing gender politics of literary production in the early 20th Century, providing important precedents for subsequent generations of women poets.

The dissolution of Imagism as a formal movement after 1917 did not mark the end of its influence but rather its diffusion into the broader streams of modernist and contemporary poetry. Its principles were adapted, extended, challenged, and transformed by subsequent poets, including its own former practitioners, in response to changing historical circumstances and new poetic concerns. This ongoing engagement with Imagist principles and practices constitutes a testament to the movement's enduring significance.

In the final analysis, Imagism's importance lies in its successful negotiation of a perennial challenge in literary innovation: the development of new forms and approaches that break with constraining traditions while establishing viable alternatives that can sustain continued creative development. By articulating clear principles and embodying them in powerful poems, the Imagists created not merely a momentary disruption but an enduring redirection of poetic practice whose effects continue to resonate in contemporary poetry.

13.14 SYMBOLISM

Symbolism emerged as one of the most influential artistic and literary movements of the late 19th Century, fundamentally altering the creative landscape and leaving an indelible mark on subsequent artistic developments. Born as a reaction against naturalism and realism, Symbolism sought to express ideas, emotions, and states of mind not through direct description but through the evocative power of symbols. The movement privileged suggestion over statement, nuance over clarity, and the subjective inner world over objective external reality. By emphasising the mystical, dreamlike, and spiritual dimensions of human experience, Symbolist artists and writers created works of profound psychological complexity and haunting beauty. Though Symbolism was primarily a European phenomenon, yet its influence extended globally, shaping modernist sensibilities throughout the 20th Century and continuing to resonate in contemporary creative expression. Through understanding Symbolism, we gain insight into a pivotal moment in cultural history when artists and thinkers challenged prevailing materialist assumptions and sought to reconnect with the mysterious, ineffable dimensions of human experience.

13.14.1 Emergence

The intellectual roots of Symbolism can be traced to several philosophical and aesthetic developments of the 18th and 19th centuries. Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), the Swedish scientist, philosopher, and theologian, was particularly influential through his theory of "correspondences," which posited that everything in the material world possessed a spiritual counterpart. According to Swedenborg, nature was a vast system of symbols that, properly

understood, could reveal divine truths. This notion of the natural world as a symbolic language would become fundamental to Symbolist aesthetics.

Romanticism, with its emphasis on imagination, emotion, individualism, and the transcendental, prepared the ground for Symbolism in numerous ways. The Romantic poets—including William Blake, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe—celebrated the visionary power of the artist and sought to penetrate beyond surface appearances to apprehend higher truths. Their interest in dreams, myths, folklore, and the supernatural would all be taken up by the Symbolists, albeit in a more esoteric and psychologically complex manner.

German Idealism, particularly as developed by philosophers such as Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, provided a philosophical framework that privileged the subjective mind over the objective world. This philosophical tradition held that true reality was spiritual rather than material and that art could serve as a medium for expressing spiritual truths beyond the reach of discursive reasoning. The Symbolists would embrace this vision of art as a means of transcending ordinary consciousness and accessing hidden dimensions of reality.

The aesthetic doctrine of "art for art's sake," championed by figures such as Théophile Gautier and later Walter Pater, emphasized artistic autonomy and rejected utilitarian approaches to art. By freeing art from moral, social, and political imperatives, this perspective allowed for a greater focus on aesthetic experience as an end in itself. The Symbolists would extend this autonomy further, seeing art as not merely self-sufficient but as a pathway to transcendent experience.

In the realm of poetry, Edgar Allan Poe's emphasis on musical qualities and suggestive ambiguity, combined with his exploration of states of consciousness at the borders of reason, made him an important precursor. Charles Baudelaire's admiration for Poe led him to translate the American writer's works into French, making them accessible to a generation of French poets who would become central to the Symbolist movement.

13.14.2 Social and Historical Contexts

The socio-historical context of the late 19th Century profoundly shaped Symbolism's emergence. This was a period of rapid industrialisation, scientific advancement, and increasing secularisation. The dominance of positivist philosophy, which emphasised empirical evidence and rational methods, left little room for spiritual or metaphysical concerns. Many artists and intellectuals felt alienated by this materialist worldview and sought alternative modes of understanding human experience.

The political landscape of Europe following the revolutions of 1848 was marked by disillusionment. Many early idealists had retreated from political engagement, seeking refuge in aesthetic pursuits. This political disenchantment, combined with a sense of spiritual emptiness in an increasingly mechanized society, created fertile ground for a movement that emphasised interior experience and spiritual values.

In France, the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871) and the Paris Commune intensified feelings of cultural crisis. The Third Republic, established in 1870, was characterised by political instability and social tensions. Against this backdrop, many artists and intellectuals turned away from social realism toward more subjective, introspective modes of expression.

The fin de siècle period (end of the 19th Century) was characterised by a pervasive sense of decadence, ennui, and anticipation of decline. This zeitgeist fostered both a fascination with decay and a yearning for spiritual renewal. The Symbolists, with their interest in altered states of

consciousness, esoteric traditions, and mystical experience, offered a response to this cultural mood, seeking transcendence through art.

13.14.3 Literary Symbolism

The term "Symbolism" as applied to a literary movement gained currency following the publication of Jean Moréas's "Le Symbolisme" manifesto in *Le Figaro* on September 18, 1886. Moréas defined Symbolist poetry as opposed to "plain meanings, declamations, false sentimentality and matter-of-fact description," advocating instead for an art that would "clothe the Ideal in a perceptible form" through symbolic language.

However, Symbolist poetry had already been developing for some time before this formal declaration. Charles Baudelaire's seminal collection "Les Fleurs du Mal" (The Flowers of Evil), published in 1857, is often identified as the first major Symbolist work, though Baudelaire himself did not use this term. His poem "Correspondances" articulated a key Symbolist concept: that sensory experiences can suggest or evoke one another and that the natural world is a "forest of symbols" that speak to the initiated observer.

Baudelaire's influence extended to a younger generation of French poets, notably Stéphane Mallarmé, Paul Verlaine, and Arthur Rimbaud, who would become central figures in the movement. In the 1870s and early 1880s, these poets developed an approach to poetry that emphasised suggestion, musicality, and the evocation of states of mind rather than clear description.

The Tuesday gatherings at Mallarmé's apartment on the rue de Rome in Paris became an important forum for the exchange of Symbolist ideas from the 1880s onward. These soirées attracted not only poets but also painters, musicians, and critics, fostering a cross-fertilisation of ideas across different art forms. The international character of these gatherings helped spread Symbolist aesthetics beyond France to other European countries.

Symbolism gained further institutional recognition with the establishment of literary journals dedicated to its principles. La Vogue, Le Symboliste, and particularly La Revue Wagnérienne and La Revue Blanche served as platforms for Symbolist writings and helped codify the movement's aesthetic principles. These publications facilitated dialogue between Symbolist poets and other artistic avant-gardes, contributing to the movement's rich interdisciplinary character.

13.14.4 The Spread of Symbolism

While Symbolism originated in France, it quickly spread throughout Europe, taking different forms according to local cultural traditions. In Belgium, a vibrant Symbolist movement emerged, with poets like Émile Verhaeren and Maurice Maeterlinck (who later won the Nobel Prize for Literature) developing distinctive approaches to Symbolist aesthetics. The journal La Jeune Belgique, founded in 1881, served as an important forum for Belgian Symbolist writing.

In Russia, Symbolism became a dominant cultural force in the early 20th Century, represented by poets such as Alexander Blok, Andrei Bely, and Vyacheslav Ivanov. Russian Symbolism was characterised by its mystical and religious dimensions, influenced by Orthodox Christianity and Russian philosophical traditions. The journals Vesy (The Scales) and Zolotoe runo (The Golden Fleece) provided platforms for Symbolist ideas in Russia.

In the English-speaking world, Symbolism influenced writers such as W.B. Yeats, Arthur Symons, and Oscar Wilde. Symons's book "The Symbolist Movement in Literature" (1899) was particularly important in introducing Symbolist ideas to English readers. In America, writers like Edgar Allan Poe (retrospectively) and Wallace Stevens showed affinities with Symbolist aesthetics.

Central European Symbolism flourished in countries like Austria, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. The Austrian writer Hugo von Hofmannsthal and the Czech poet Otokar Březina produced works deeply influenced by Symbolist aesthetics. In Poland, writers associated with the "Young Poland" movement, such as Stanisław Przybyszewski and Tadeusz Miciński, incorporated Symbolist elements into their work.

In Nordic countries, especially Sweden and Norway, Symbolism merged with national romantic traditions. Swedish writer Gustaf Fröding and Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen, particularly in his later works, displayed Symbolist tendencies in their explorations of psychological states and use of symbolic imagery.

The international reach of Symbolism was facilitated by translations, literary journals, and personal connections between writers across national boundaries. This transnational character contributed to the richness and diversity of Symbolist expression while maintaining certain core aesthetic principles across different national contexts.

13.15 MAJOR AUTHORS

13.15.1 Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867)

Though he died before Symbolism was formally defined as a movement, Charles Baudelaire is universally acknowledged as its most important precursor and influence. His collection "Les Fleurs du Mal" (The Flowers of Evil), particularly after its expanded edition of 1861, established many of the themes and techniques that would become central to Symbolist poetry.

Baudelaire's concept of "correspondences" between different sensory experiences—articulated in his sonnet of that name—provided a theoretical foundation for Symbolist aesthetics. His exploration of synesthesia, the blending of different sensory perceptions, would become a characteristic feature of Symbolist writing. In poems like "L'Invitation au Voyage" and "Parfum Exotique," Baudelaire created evocative landscapes that function as states of mind rather than literal descriptions.

His cycle of prose poems, "Le Spleen de Paris" (Paris Spleen), published posthumously in 1869, further developed the possibilities of suggestion and evocation through its fragmentary structure and atmospheric quality. The work captures the experience of urban modernity while simultaneously seeking escape through imagination and altered states of consciousness.

Baudelaire's poetic persona—the flâneur or urban wanderer who observes modern life with a mixture of fascination and disgust—would become an emblematic figure for the Symbolist sensibility. His articulation of ennui, spiritual longing, and the search for transcendence amid material decay resonated powerfully with subsequent generations of poets.

In his critical writings, especially "The Painter of Modern Life" (1863), Baudelaire developed a theory of modern beauty that embraced the transient and contingent alongside the eternal and ideal. This dialectical understanding of aesthetics would inform the Symbolist approach to beauty as something both ephemeral and transcendent.

13.15.2 Stéphane Mallarmé (1842-1898)

Stéphane Mallarmé stands as perhaps the most radical and influential theorist and practitioner of Symbolist poetics. Through both his poetry and his Tuesday evening salons at his apartment on the rue de Rome in Paris, Mallarmé exerted an enormous influence on the development of Symbolism and modernist literature more broadly.

Mallarmé's early work, such as "L'Après-midi d'un Faune" (The Afternoon of a Faun, 1876), which inspired Debussy's famous musical composition, already displayed his interest in suggestion, ambiguity, and the musical qualities of language. However, it was his later, more experimental work that most fully embodied his revolutionary poetics.

In poems like "Hérodiade" and "Igitur," Mallarmé developed an increasingly abstract and difficult style characterised by syntactic complexity, semantic ambiguity, and typographical innovation. His use of white space, variable typography, and unconventional syntax in these works anticipated many features of the 20th- Century experimental poetry.

Mallarmé's most ambitious and challenging work, "Un Coup de Dés Jamais N'Abolira Le Hasard" (A Throw of the Dice Will Never Abolish Chance), published in 1897, represents the culmination of his poetic experimentation. This poem, with its scattered text, multiple reading paths, and complex visual organisation, pushed the boundaries of poetic form and anticipated later developments in concrete and visual poetry.

Theoretically, Mallarmé articulated a vision of poetry as an autonomous realm governed by its own laws rather than by referential relations to external reality. He famously declared that poetry should "paint not the thing but the effect it produces" and that it should "give a purer meaning to the words of the tribe." For Mallarmé, the poem was not a vehicle for expressing pre-existing ideas but a linguistic construction that created meaning through its internal relations.

Mallarmé's concepts of "Le hasard" (chance) and "Le Néant" (nothingness) reflected his engagement with philosophical nihilism and his attempt to create meaning in a universe without transcendent guarantees. His vision of the poem as a response to cosmic meaninglessness would influence existentialist and post-structuralist thought in the 20th Century.

13.15.3 Paul Verlaine (1844-1896)

Paul Verlaine brought to Symbolist poetry a distinctive musicality and emotional directness that complemented the more intellectual approach of Mallarmé. His collection "Poèmes saturniens" (Saturnian Poems, 1866) already displayed his characteristic melancholy and his skill at capturing fleeting moods and impressions.

Verlaine's "Art poétique" (1874) became a kind of manifesto for Symbolist poetry with its famous opening line, "De la musique avant toute chose" (Music before all else). The poem advocates for nuance, suggestion, and imprecision: "Not color, nothing but nuance!" and "Take eloquence and wring its neck!" It emphasises the importance of odd numbers, the indefinite, and the melding of genres.

Collections such as "Romances sans paroles" (Songs Without Words, 1874) and "Sagesse" (Wisdom, 1880) exemplify Verlaine's distinctive style, characterised by subtle musicality, emotional vulnerability, and a sense of melancholy. His poems often evoke landscapes that serve as correlatives for emotional states, as in the famous "IL pleure dans Mon coeur" (It rains in my heart).

Verlaine's turbulent personal life, including his stormy relationship with Arthur Rimbaud and his subsequent religious conversion, informed the psychological complexity of his work. The tension between sensuality and spirituality, so characteristic of Symbolist aesthetics, found powerful expression in Verlaine's poetry.

While less radically experimental than Mallarmé, Verlaine was nonetheless innovative in his use of rhythm and sound. His poetry, with its subtle assonances, internal rhymes, and fluid rhythms, created effects that seemed to dissolve the boundaries between music and language, embodying the Symbolist ideal of synesthetic art.

13.15.4 Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891)

Despite his brief literary career, which effectively ended when he abandoned poetry at the age of 21, Arthur Rimbaud had a profound impact on Symbolist aesthetics and modern poetry more generally. His work pushed the boundaries of poetic language and convention with unprecedented audacity.

Rimbaud's famous "Lettre du voyant" (Letter of the Seer, 1871), addressed to Paul Demeny, articulated his revolutionary poetics. In this letter, Rimbaud declared that "the poet makes himself a seer through a long, immense, and reasoned derangement of all the senses" and that "I is another." These statements reflected his belief in poetry as a visionary activity that transcended individual identity and rational consciousness.

His collection "Une Saison en Enfer" (A Season in Hell, 1873) combined prose and verse to create a hallucinatory spiritual autobiography. The work chronicles the poet's attempt to transform himself and his perception through various forms of excess and derangement, ultimately ending with a complicated renunciation of his visionary project.

"Illuminations," written between 1872 and 1875 but published in 1886, represents the culmination of Rimbaud's poetic innovation. These prose poems create dreamlike scenarios, fantastical landscapes, and visionary experiences through their unprecedented linguistic freedom and imagistic power. Poems like "Aube" (Dawn) and "Ville" (City) display Rimbaud's ability to transform perception through language, creating what he called "alchemy of the word."

Rimbaud's technical innovations included the development of free verse and prose poetry, the disruption of conventional syntax, and the creation of startling metaphors that defied logical explanation. His work embodied the Symbolist rejection of mimetic representation in favor of creating new realities through language.

The mythic quality of Rimbaud's life—his meteoric literary career, his tempestuous relationship with Verlaine, and his subsequent abandonment of poetry for a life of travel and commerce in Africa—contributed to his iconic status within Symbolist circles and beyond. His vision of the poet as a revolutionary figure who transforms perception has remained influential to this day.

13.15.5 William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)

Although primarily associated with the Irish Literary Revival, W.B. Yeats was profoundly influenced by French Symbolism and incorporated many Symbolist techniques and themes into his work. His engagement with occult traditions, mysticism, and symbolic systems made him a natural ally of Symbolist aesthetics.

Yeats discovered French Symbolist poetry through Arthur Symons, whose book "The Symbolist Movement in Literature" (1899) introduced these writers to English-speaking audiences. Yeats was particularly drawn to the work of Mallarmé and Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, whose emphasis on spiritual and occult themes resonated with his own interests.

His early collections, such as "The Wind Among the Reeds" (1899), display clear Symbolist influences in their dreamlike atmosphere, mythological references, and use of personal symbols. Poems like "The Valley of the Black Pig" and "He Mourns for the Change That Has Come Upon Him and His Beloved, and Wishes That He Were Anything but a Human Being" create evocative atmospheres through suggestion rather than direct statement.

Yeats developed his own complex symbolic system, drawing on Celtic mythology, theosophy, and his personal visions. This system, elaborated in his prose work "A Vision" (1925,

revised 1937), provided the symbolic framework for much of his mature poetry. His use of recurrent symbols such as the tower, the gyre, and the mask created a richly textured symbolic landscape across his body of work.

In poems like “Sailing to Byzantium,” “Byzantium,” and “The Second Coming,” Yeats employed powerful symbolic imagery to explore themes of spiritual transformation, historical cycles, and the relationship between the material and spiritual worlds. The famous opening of “The Second Coming”—“Turning and turning in the widening gyre / The falcon cannot hear the falconer”—exemplifies his ability to create symbols that work simultaneously on personal, historical, and cosmic levels.

Yeats’s late work, while moving toward greater clarity and directness, maintained its symbolic dimension. Collections like “The Tower” (1928) and “The Winding Stair and Other Poems” (1933) continued to explore the relationship between the temporal and the eternal through symbolic means, though with a more explicit engagement with Irish history and politics.

13.15.6 Other Significant Symbolist Writers

Numerous other writers made important contributions to Symbolist literature across various national contexts. In France, Jules Laforgue developed a distinctive symbolist style characterised by irony, colloquial language, and psychological complexity. His collections “Les Complaintes” (1885) and “L’Imitation de Notre-Dame la Lune” (1886) influenced T.S. Eliot and other modernist poets.

Jean Moréas, who wrote the “Symbolist Manifesto” of 1886, developed his own poetic practice in works such as “Les Syrtes” (1884) and “Les Cantilènes” (1886). Though he later moved away from Symbolism toward a more classical style, his early work exemplified the movement’s characteristic features.

In Belgium, Georges Rodenbach created haunting symbolist narratives set in dying medieval cities. His novel “Bruges-la-Morte” (Bruges the Dead, 1892) used the city of Bruges as an elaborate symbol for the protagonist’s grief and obsession with his dead wife. The work incorporated photographs, making it an early example of multimedia literature.

Émile Verhaeren, another Belgian symbolist, evolved from decadent themes to a more expansive vision of modern life. His collections “Les Villes tentaculaires” (The Tentacular Cities, 1895) and “Les Forces tumultueuses” (Tumultuous Forces, 1902) created powerful symbols of industrialisation and urban growth.

Oscar Wilde’s fairy tales and his novel “The Picture of Dorian Gray” (1890) incorporated symbolist elements, particularly in their use of objects (like the portrait in “Dorian Gray”) as complex symbols of moral and psychological states. Wilde's only play in French, “Salomé” (1891), exemplifies symbolist drama in its ritualistic quality and symbolic treatment of desire and death.

In Germany, Stefan George developed a highly aestheticized symbolist poetry characterized by formal perfection and esoteric symbolism. His journal “Blätter für die Kunst” (Pages for Art) promoted symbolist aesthetics in the German-speaking world. George's collections, such as "Das Jahr der Seele” (The Year of the Soul, 1897) and “Der Teppich des Lebens” (The Tapestry of Life, 1899), created a rarefied symbolic world removed from everyday reality.

The Austrian poet Hugo von Hofmannsthal began his career as a symbolist before his famous “Lord Chandos Letter” (1902), which dramatised a crisis of language. His early lyrics and dramas, such as “Der Tod des Tizian” (The Death of Titian, 1892), exemplify Symbolist aesthetics in their musicality and suggestiveness.

In Poland, writers associated with the "Young Poland Movement" incorporated Symbolist elements into their works. Stanisław Przybyszewski advocated for a visionary art based on exploration of the "naked soul," while Tadeusz Miciński created poetry and prose that combined symbolist techniques with elements from Polish folklore and esoteric traditions.

In Japan, writers like Ōgai Mori and Ueda Bin introduced Symbolist ideas through translations and their own creative work. The influence of European Symbolism on Japanese literature was significant, particularly in the development of modern Japanese poetry.

13.15.7 Characteristics of Symbolism

Philosophical Foundations

At its core, Symbolism was grounded in a rejection of positivism and materialism in favour of idealism and spiritualism. Symbolist artists and writers generally held that ultimate reality was spiritual rather than material and that this spiritual reality could be accessed through art, intuition, and symbolic perception rather than through scientific methods or rational analysis.

Many Symbolists were influenced by Platonic and Neoplatonic traditions, which posited a realm of ideal forms behind the world of appearances. This philosophical orientation enabled them to see the material world as a system of signs pointing toward transcendent realities. Arthur Schopenhauer's philosophy, particularly his emphasis on the world as representation and the privileged role of art in revealing the nature of reality, was especially influential for many Symbolist writers.

Friedrich Nietzsche's critique of rationalism and his concept of the Dionysian in art resonated with the Symbolist valorisation of non-rational modes of experience. Though Nietzsche's vitalism contrasted with the more spiritualistic tendencies of many Symbolists, his emphasis on art as a profound response to the meaninglessness of existence found echoes in Symbolist aesthetics.

Eastern philosophical traditions, particularly Hinduism and Buddhism, influenced some Symbolist writers through their emphasis on the illusory nature of material reality and the possibility of transcending ordinary consciousness. These influences were often mediated through theosophy and other Western esoteric movements, which synthesised Eastern and Western mystical traditions.

Symbolism was also informed by developments in psychology, particularly early investigations into dreams, hypnosis, and unconscious processes. The work of figures like Jean-Martin Charcot on hysteria and hypnosis at the Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris interested many Symbolist writers, who saw in these phenomena evidence of the mind's capacity to transcend ordinary perception. This interest anticipated Freudian and Jungian psychoanalysis, which would later provide more systematic accounts of symbolism in dreams and the unconscious.

Aesthetic Principles

The fundamental aesthetic principle of Symbolism was indirection: expressing ideas and emotions not through direct statement but through suggestion and evocation. As Mallarmé famously put it, poetry should "paint not the thing but the effect it produces." This emphasis on suggestion allowed for multiple interpretations and engaged the reader as an active participant in creating meaning. They involve elements like balance, contrast, harmony and proportion, which contribute to the visual or sensory appeal of a design or artwork. Different cultures and areas have varying aesthetic values, but some principles are consistently applied across various art forms.

Symbolist aesthetics privileged the subjective over the objective. Rather than attempting to represent external reality accurately, Symbolist artists sought to express inner states, moods, and

visions. This subjective orientation was not merely personal but aimed at revealing universal psychological and spiritual truths through individual experience.

Symbols in Symbolist art and literature functioned differently from allegorical figures or conventional metaphors. Unlike allegory, where abstract concepts are personified in a relatively straightforward manner, Symbolist symbols were multivalent and inexhaustible in their meanings. A symbol like Mallarmé's swan or Maeterlinck's blind people could suggest numerous interpretations simultaneously without being reducible to any single meaning.

Synaesthesia—the blending or correspondence between different sensory modalities—was a central Symbolist device. Baudelaire's sonnet "Correspondances" articulated this principle with its famous lines: "Les parfums, les couleurs et les sons se répondent" (Perfumes, colors, and sounds respond to one another). This cross-sensory approach was reflected in the Symbolists' interest in Wagner's concept of the "Gesamtkunstwerk" or total artwork, which integrated multiple artistic media.

The notion of art as incantation or magic influenced Symbolist aesthetics profoundly. Mallarmé spoke of poetry as a form of "white magic" that transformed reality through language. This conception of art as transformative ritual rather than representation or expression distinguished Symbolism from both realism and romanticism.

Formal experimentation was central to Symbolist practice across all arts. In poetry, this included innovations in verse forms, syntax, and typography. Mallarmé's "Un Coup de Dés" represents the most radical example of such experimentation, but even more conventional Symbolist poetry tended to employ unusual rhythms, sound patterns, and structural devices.

Thematic Preoccupations

Symbolist literature was characterised by certain recurrent themes that reflected its philosophical orientation and aesthetic principles. Death, decay, and mortality featured prominently in Symbolists works, not merely as subjects for melancholy reflection but as thresholds to other states of being. The boundary between life and death was often portrayed as permeable, with figures like ghosts and revenants suggesting the interpenetration of different orders of reality.

Dreams and altered states of consciousness represented another major thematic focus. Symbolist writers were fascinated by states of mind that transcended ordinary waking consciousness, including dreams, reveries, hallucinations, and mystical experiences. These states were valued for their revelatory potential, offering glimpses of realities inaccessible to ordinary perception.

Sexuality in Symbolist works was often portrayed in complex, ambivalent terms. Female figures like Salome, Lilith, and the sphinx represented both attraction and danger, reflecting anxieties about female sexuality characteristic of the period.

The femme fatale archetype—the dangerous, seductive woman who leads men to destruction—appeared frequently in Symbolist literature and art, reflecting complex attitudes toward gender and sexuality. At the same time, many Symbolist works featured androgynous figures that transcended conventional gender categories, suggesting a spiritual ideal beyond sexual differentiation.

Urban modernity formed another important thematic complex in Symbolist literature. Cities were often portrayed as sites of alienation, artifice, and spiritual decay, but also as spaces of mystery and potential transformation. Baudelaire's Paris, Blok's Petersburg, and the Bruges of

Rodenbach all function as symbolic landscapes embodying complex attitudes toward modern urban experience.

The conflict between idealism and materialism, spirit and flesh, constituted a central tension in many Symbolists works. This conflict was often portrayed through characters torn between spiritual aspirations and physical desires, or through symbolic landscapes that juxtaposed natural and artificial elements. The greenhouse or hothouse, which appeared in works by Maeterlinck and others, symbolised this tension: a space where nature is simultaneously preserved and made artificial.

Occult and esoteric traditions provided both themes and symbolic vocabularies for many Symbolist writers. References to alchemy, astrology, tarot, kabbalah, and other esoteric systems appeared throughout Symbolist literature, reflecting the movement's interest in hidden knowledge and alternative spiritual traditions. These references were not merely decorative but expressed the Symbolist belief in correspondences between different levels of reality.

Time and memory emerged as significant thematic concerns in Symbolist works. Many Symbolist narratives played with chronology, creating dreamlike temporalities in which past, present, and future interpenetrated. Memory was often portrayed not as simple recall but as a creative faculty that transformed experience into symbolic form.

The figure of the artist as seer or priest appeared frequently in Symbolist literature. This conception of the artist as a visionary mediator between ordinary reality and transcendent truth reflected the movement's elevated view of artistic vocation. In works like Wilde's "The Picture of Dorian Gray" and Huysmans's "À rebours" (Against Nature), the protagonist's aesthetic sensibility becomes both a path to transcendence and a potential source of destruction.

Stylistic Features

Symbolist literature developed distinctive stylistic features to achieve its aesthetic aims. Perhaps the most characteristic was its emphasis on musicality and sound. Verlaine's dictum "De la musique avant toute chose" (Music before all else) expressed the Symbolist conviction that the sonic qualities of language could evoke states of mind and suggest meanings beyond the literal. Complex patterns of assonance, alliteration, and internal rhyme created subtle musical effects in Symbolist poetry.

The use of free verse and prose poetry represented important Symbolist innovations. Although some Symbolist poets, like Mallarmé, continued to work with traditional verse forms, others, particularly Rimbaud in "Illuminations," developed new forms freed from conventional metrical patterns. The prose poem, which combined the concentrated language of poetry with the syntactic flexibility of prose, became an important Symbolist form, particularly suitable for creating dreamlike narratives and atmospheric descriptions.

Syntactic complexity and ambiguity characterised much Symbolist writing. Mallarmé's poetry, in particular, employed unusual word order, ellipses, and grammatical ambiguities to create multiple possible readings. This syntactic indeterminacy reflected the Symbolist preference for suggestion over statement and invited the reader's active participation in creating meaning.

Imagery in Symbolist literature tended toward the unusual, exotic, and artificial. Precious stones, rare flowers, Byzantine icons, and other objects associated with refinement and artifice appeared frequently, reflecting the Symbolist rejection of the commonplace and natural in favor of the rare and cultivated. This preference for the artificial was not merely aesthetic but expressed the belief that art improved upon nature by revealing its symbolic dimensions.

Symbolist style was often characterised by an atmospheric quality that emphasized mood and sensation over clear description or narrative. Settings were frequently indeterminate or dreamlike, with detailed realistic description giving way to suggestive fragments that evoked states of mind. This atmospheric approach created a sense of mystery and allowed for multiple interpretations.

Irony and self-reflexivity appeared in many Symbolists works, particularly in the later phases of the movement. Jules Laforgue developed a distinctive ironic Symbolism that combined elevated symbolic imagery with colloquial language and humour. This self-conscious dimension of Symbolism anticipated modernist concerns with the limitations of language and representation.

Influence on The Modernist Literature

Symbolism played a crucial role in the development of literary modernism in the early 20th Century. T.S. Eliot acknowledged his debt to Jules Laforgue and other Symbolist poets, whose influence is evident in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1915) and "The Waste Land" (1922). Eliot's use of fragmented form, symbolic landscapes, and mythic references continued the Symbolist tradition while adapting it to new historical circumstances.

James Joyce's work, particularly "Ulysses" (1922) and "Finnegans Wake" (1939), extended Symbolist techniques in radical ways. Joyce's use of stream of consciousness, linguistic experimentation, and elaborate symbolic structures built upon Symbolist innovations while pushing them in new directions. The Stephen Dedalus sections of "Ulysses," with their emphasis on aesthetic theory and epiphanic moments, show particular affinities with Symbolist concerns.

Wallace Stevens, with his philosophical exploration of imagination and reality, continued the Symbolist tradition in American poetry. Poems like "Sunday Morning" and "The Snow Man" employed Symbolist techniques to explore the relationship between consciousness and the external world. Stevens's concept of the "supreme fiction"—imaginative constructs that provide meaning in a world without transcendent guarantees—developed Mallarmé's insights in a new direction.

William Faulkner's novels, with their stream-of-consciousness narration, non-linear chronology, and symbolic landscapes, showed clear Symbolist influences. Works like "The Sound and the Fury" (1929) and "Absalom, Absalom!" (1936) created complex symbolic structures that revealed psychological and historical truths through indirect means.

Virginia Woolf's novels, particularly "To the Lighthouse" (1927) and "The Waves" (1931), developed Symbolist techniques to explore consciousness and perception. Her concept of "moments of being"—instances of intensified awareness that reveal patterns beneath the surface of ordinary experience—paralleled the Symbolist interest in privileged moments of heightened perception.

Marcel Proust's monumental novel cycle "À la recherché du temps perdu" (In Search of Lost Time, 1913-1927) represented perhaps the most ambitious extension of Symbolist aesthetics in narrative form. Proust's exploration of memory, time, and sensation through elaborate symbolic structures and lengthy periods of introspection developed Symbolist techniques on an unprecedented scale.

Symbolism remains one of the most significant artistic and intellectual movements of the modern era, both for its immediate impact on European culture at the fin de siècle and for its continuing influence on subsequent artistic developments. By challenging prevailing materialist and positivist assumptions and insisting on the primacy of subjective experience and spiritual values, the Symbolists articulated a powerful alternative vision of modernity.

The movement's aesthetic innovations—its emphasis on suggestion over statement, its exploration of dreams and altered states, its development of new poetic forms and techniques—transformed the language of art and literature in ways that continue to resonate. Symbolist techniques of indirection, ambiguity, and symbolic condensation have become fundamental tools in the modern artistic repertoire.

At the same time, contemporary critical perspectives have highlighted aspects of Symbolism that reflect the limitations and prejudices of its historical context. The movement's orientalist fantasies, its often problematic representations of women, and its frequent retreat from social and political engagement have been subjected to necessary critique.

What remains most vital about Symbolism is its insistence on art's capacity to access dimensions of experience beyond the empirically observable and rationally explicable. In an era increasingly dominated by instrumental reason, algorithmic processes, and utilitarian values, the Symbolist vision of art as a form of spiritual inquiry and symbolic revelation offers a crucial counterbalance.

The Symbolist legacy suggests that the most profound truths may be those that can only be approached indirectly, through the resonant power of symbols that work on multiple levels simultaneously. In this sense, Symbolism was not merely a historical movement but an enduring mode of perception and creation that continues to open new possibilities for artistic expression and human understanding.

13.16 THE MOVEMENT

The Movement was a group of writers including Philip Larkin, Kingsley Amis, Donald Davie, Thom Gunn, John Wain, D.J. Enright, Elizabeth Jennings and Robert Conquest. The Movement was essentially English in character as poets from other parts of the United Kingdom were not involved.

The Movement emerged in the mid-1950s as a significant literary phenomenon in British poetry. It represented a conscious shift away from the romanticism and symbolism that had dominated earlier 20th- Century poetry, particularly the neo-romanticism of Dylan Thomas and the modernist experimentation of poets like T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. The Movement poets favoured clarity, restraint, and intellectual engagement over emotional excess and obscurity. They praised rationality, precision, and formal control, often employing traditional meters and forms. The Movement was not a formal school with a manifesto but rather a loose association of like-minded poets who shared certain aesthetic principles and a general outlook on poetry's purpose and practice.

13.16.1 Historical Background

The Movement emerged in the specific cultural and historical context of the post-World War II Britain. The nation was recovering from the devastating effects of the war, facing economic hardship, and witnessing the dissolution of its empire. The austerity of the post-war years created an atmosphere where extravagance—in life and in art—seemed inappropriate. The social landscape was changing dramatically with the establishment of the welfare state and the slow dismantling of rigid class structures. This environment fostered a literary sensibility that valued moderation, clarity, and pragmatism.

The 1950s represented a transitional period in British society. The Festival of Britain in 1951 attempted to foster a sense of recovery and optimism, yet the Suez Crisis of 1956 underscored Britain's diminished global influence. The coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953 symbolised

continuity with tradition even as the country moved toward modernity. This tension between tradition and change, between holding onto the past and embracing new realities, significantly influenced the sensibilities of Movement writers.

The Movement poets were generally university-educated young men from middle-class backgrounds who had come of age during the war or its immediate aftermath. Their education at Oxford, Cambridge, and other prestigious universities connected them with classical traditions and forms, while their middle-class sensibilities often led them to distrust both aristocratic pretension and revolutionary fervor. This positioned them somewhat apart from both the established literary elite and the emerging counterculture.

13.16.2 Literary Precursors

The Movement developed partly as a reaction against the perceived excesses of modernism and neo-romanticism. While modernist poetry had revolutionised the form with its fragmentation, allusive complexity, and experimental techniques, by the 1950s, many younger poets felt this approach had become mannered and divorced from ordinary experience. Similarly, they viewed the emotional intensity and ornate language of the neo-romantics, exemplified by Dylan Thomas, as overwrought and lacking in intellectual discipline.

The Movement poets drew inspiration from different sources. They admired the clarity and precision of Classical poetry and the English Metaphysical tradition. They looked back to Thomas Hardy and W.B. Yeats as models of poets who combined formal control with clear-eyed examination of experience. They also found affinity with certain American poets, particularly Robert Frost, whose apparent simplicity masked sophisticated philosophical inquiry.

Literary critic and poet Al Alvarez later characterised The Movement as a "negative feedback" to the excesses of poetic modernism, suggesting that it represented a conscious stepping back from the experimental intensity of earlier Twentieth- Century Poetry. However, this view somewhat simplifies the complex relationship Movement poets had with their literary predecessors.

13.16.3 Naming and Group Formation

The term "The Movement" was first applied to this loose grouping of poets by J.D. Scott, literary editor of *The Spectator*, in an editorial accompanying their publication in that magazine in 1954. Scott characterised them as representing "an orthodoxy, a way of going," marked by "boredom with the despair of the Forties, impatience with the moral and intellectual muddiness of the Neo-romantic hangover." The label stuck, though many of the poets themselves were ambivalent about being classified as a coherent group or movement.

The publication that most solidified the identity of The Movement was the anthology "New Lines," edited by Robert Conquest and published in 1956. Conquest's introduction articulated many of the aesthetic principles that united these poets, emphasising their preference for "a certain kind of sensibility, empirical in its attitude to all that comes," and their belief in "the continuing importance...of the individual human being."

Despite these shared publications and affinities, The Movement was never a formal school with a manifesto or organised meetings. The poets included under its umbrella had diverse voices and approaches, and some, like Thom Gunn, would later move in significantly different directions. What united them initially was less a programmatic aesthetic than a shared set of values and reactions against what they perceived as the dominant poetic modes of the preceding generation.

13.17 MAJOR WRITERS

13.17.1 Philip Larkin (1922-1985)

Philip Larkin emerged as perhaps the most significant and enduring voice associated with The Movement. Born in Coventry, educated at Oxford, and working for most of his adult life as a librarian at the University of Hull, Larkin embodied the middle-class, provincial sensibility often associated with Movement poetry.

Larkin's first mature collection, "The Less Deceived" (1955), established him as a major poetic voice. The volume includes several of his most celebrated poems, including "Church Going," "Toads," and "Deceptions." These works exemplify his clear, accessible style, his subtle use of traditional forms, and his unflinching examination of disappointment and limitation.

His subsequent collections, "The Whitsun Weddings" (1964) and "High Windows" (1974), further cemented his reputation. "The Whitsun Weddings" contains the titular poem, an observational masterpiece that moves from specific details of a train journey to broader reflections on marriage, community, and change. "An Arundel Tomb" concludes with the famous, ambiguous assertion that "What will survive of us is love," a statement complicated by the ironies that precede it. "High Windows" includes more openly pessimistic works like "This Be The Verse" ("They fuck you up, your mum and dad") and the title poem, which juxtaposes contemporary sexual freedom with a transcendent, though empty, vision of "high windows" and "deep blue air."

Larkin's poetry is characterised by its precise diction, careful formal structures, and unsentimental examination of everyday experiences. His work often explores themes of disappointment, social change, mortality, and the tension between private desires and social expectations. Despite his technical skill and intellectual depth, Larkin deliberately employed accessible language and addressed universal experiences, which contributed to his popularity beyond academic circles.

Larkin's prose writings, particularly his essays on jazz and literature collected in "All What Jazz" (1970) and "Required Writing" (1983), reveal his critical acumen and cultural conservatism. His letters, published posthumously, sparked controversy for their occasional expressions of racist and misogynistic views, complicating his literary legacy.

13.17.2 Kingsley Amis (1922-1995)

Though better known as a novelist, particularly for his campus novel "Lucky Jim" (1954), Kingsley Amis was also a poet associated with The Movement. Like Larkin, with whom he maintained a lifelong friendship, Amis studied at Oxford and brought a keen, often satirical eye to British social mores and pretensions.

Amis's poetry appeared in collections such as "A Frame of Mind" (1953), "Bright November" (1947), and "A Case of Samples" (1956). His poetic work shares the Movement's clarity and formal control but often employs a more overtly satirical and humorous tone than some of his contemporaries. Poems like "Against Romanticism" directly challenge the excesses of romantic poetry, while others like "Obituary for the Sixties" skewer cultural and political trends.

Amis's novel "Lucky Jim" captures many Movement sensibilities in prose form. Its protagonist, Jim Dixon, rebels against academic pretension and cultural elitism, embodying a down-to-earth skepticism toward intellectual fashions. The novel's comic deflation of highbrow culture resonates with The Movement's emphasis on clarity and authenticity over obscurity and pretension.

As Amis aged, his politics shifted rightward, and his later novels often express a curmudgeonly conservatism. Works like “Stanley and the Women” (1984) and “The Old Devils” (1986), which won the Booker Prize, continue his satirical examination of British society but from an increasingly conservative perspective. This political evolution parallels similar shifts in some other Movement figures, though not all followed the same trajectory.

13.17.3 Donald Davie (1922-1995)

Donald Davie brought a distinctive intellectual rigor to The Movement. Educated at Cambridge, where he later taught, Davie was both a significant poet and an influential critic whose theoretical writings helped articulate some of the aesthetic principles associated with Movement poetry.

Davie’s poetry collections include “Brides of Reason” (1955), “A Winter Talent” (1957), and “Events and Wisdoms” (1964). His work is characterised by intellectual precision, formal control, and an engagement with both literary tradition and contemporary experience. Poems like “Remembering the Thirties” examine the relationship between poetry and political commitment, while works such as “Wilderness Meditations” explore spiritual and philosophical questions within rigorously crafted forms.

As a critic, Davie made important contributions to understanding both The Movement’s aesthetic and broader poetic traditions. In “Purity of Diction in English Verse” (1952) and “Articulate Energy” (1955), he argued for clarity and precision in poetic language and analysed how syntax creates meaning in poetry. These critical works provide theoretical underpinnings for many Movement practices while placing them within a broader historical context of English poetic tradition.

Later in his career, Davie spent significant time in the United States, teaching at Stanford and Vanderbilt Universities. His poetic work evolved to engage more directly with American landscapes and literary traditions, particularly in collections like “Essex Poems” (1969) and “The Shires” (1974), which explore geographical and cultural identities. This American connection distinguishes him somewhat from other Movement poets who remained more firmly rooted in British contexts.

13.17.4 John Wain (1925-1994)

John Wain emerged as both a poet and novelist associated with The Movement. After studying at Oxford, where he later briefly taught, Wain worked as a freelance writer and broadcaster, becoming a familiar voice on BBC radio programmes.

His poetry appears in collections including “A Word Carved on a Sill” (1956), “Weep Before God” (1961), and “Wildtrack” (1965). Wain’s poetic voice combines intellectual rigor with emotional directness, often exploring themes of alienation, relationships, and the search for meaning in modern life. His work typically employs straightforward language and traditional forms while addressing contemporary concerns.

Like Amis, Wain gained particular recognition for his prose fiction. His first novel, “Hurry On Down” (1953), preceded Amis’s “Lucky Jim” and similarly features a disaffected young protagonist rebelling against social expectations and pretensions. The novel captures the restlessness and uncertainty of post-war Britain and established Wain as an important voice in the development of the postwar British novel.

Wain was also a significant literary critic, serving as Professor of Poetry at Oxford from 1973 to 1978 and publishing critical works including “Preliminary Essays” (1957) and studies of

authors ranging from Samuel Johnson to Arnold Bennett. His critical writing, like his poetry, values clarity and intellectual engagement while maintaining an accessible style.

13.17.5 Elizabeth Jennings (1926-2001)

Elizabeth Jennings stands out as the most prominent female poet associated with The Movement. After studying at Oxford, she worked in publishing and as a librarian while establishing herself as a significant poetic voice.

Jennings's early collections, including "Poems" (1953) and "A Way of Looking" (1955), which won the Somerset Maugham Award, establish her distinctive voice within The Movement aesthetic. Her works share the clarity, precision, and formal control valued by her male counterparts but often bring more overtly spiritual and emotional dimension to these qualities.

Religion and faith became increasingly important themes in Jennings's poetry. As a convert to Catholicism, she explored religious experience in collections like "The Mind Has Mountains" (1966), drawing its title from Gerard Manley Hopkins, and "Growing Points" (1975). Her religious poetry avoids both dogmatic assertion and vague mysticism, instead examining spiritual experience with the same clarity and precision she brought to other subjects.

Jennings also wrote movingly about psychological suffering, drawing on her own experiences with mental illness. Collections like "Recoveries" (1964) and "Relationships" (1972) explore themes of breakdown, healing, and human connection with remarkable honesty and formal control. This willingness to address personal suffering while maintaining emotional restraint and formal discipline exemplifies how Movement sensibilities could accommodate deeply felt experience without lapsing into sentimentality or confessionalism.

Despite her association with The Movement, Jennings maintained a distinctive voice throughout her career. Her later collections, including "Consequently I Rejoice" (1977) and "Timely Issues" (1989), continue to explore religious, psychological, and interpersonal themes with characteristic precision and depth. Though less widely recognized today than Larkin, Jennings's substantial body of work represents an important dimension of Movement poetry.

13.17.6 Thomas Gunn (1929-2004)

Thom Gunn began his career firmly within The Movement aesthetic but later followed a unique trajectory that took him far from his origins. Born in Gravesend, Kent, and educated at Cambridge, Gunn moved to the United States in 1954 to study at Stanford University and remained in San Francisco for most of his life.

Gunn's early collections, "Fighting Terms" (1954) and "The Sense of Movement" (1957), exemplify many Movement characteristics. These works employ traditional forms and meters, clear diction, and an intellectual approach to experience. Poems like "On the Move," with its examination of motorcycle gangs as modern manifestations of restlessness and will, typify his early style's combination of traditional form with contemporary subject matter.

As Gunn settled in San Francisco and became immersed in American counterculture, his poetry underwent significant transformation. Collections like "My Sad Captains" (1961) show a transitional phase, while "Moly" (1971) and "Jack Straw's Castle" (1976) reflect his engagement with psychedelic experience and the sexual liberation movements of the 1960s and 70s. His forms loosened, incorporating free verse alongside his earlier metrical precision, and his subject matter expanded to encompass drug experiences, sexual exploration, and American landscapes.

Gunn's later work, particularly "The Man with Night Sweats" (1992), powerfully chronicles the AIDS epidemic that devastated San Francisco's gay community. These poems combine his

technical skill with profound emotional response to loss, creating some of the most moving elegiac poetry of the late Twentieth Century. Through these shifts, Gunn maintained certain Movement qualities—clarity, precision, and intellectual engagement—while moving far beyond the typically British, socially conservative context of his early work.

13.17.7 Robert Conquest (1917-2015)

Robert Conquest occupies a unique position in relation to The Movement, serving as both a poet within its aesthetic and the anthology editor who helped define the group's identity. After studying at Oxford and serving in the World War II, Conquest worked in the British Foreign Office while establishing himself as a poet and, later, as a historian specialising in Soviet history.

As an editor of the anthology "New Lines" (1956), Conquest provided the most important showcase for Movement poetry. His introduction articulated key Movement principles, emphasizing empiricism, clarity, and the importance of the individual human experience. The anthology included work by all the major Movement poets and helped establish their collective identity in the literary landscape.

Conquest's own poetry appears in collections including "Poems" (1955) and "Between Mars and Venus" (1962). His work exemplifies Movement qualities: formal control, clear diction, and an empirical approach to experience. However, he is less well-remembered as a poet than as an editor and historian.

Beyond his literary work, Conquest gained renown as a historian whose books, including "The Great Terror" (1968), documented the atrocities of Stalin's regime. His political views, initially left-wing, shifted rightward over time, leading him to become associated with conservative politics in both Britain and America, where he spent much of his later career at Stanford University's Hoover Institution.

13.17.8 D.J. Enright (1920-2002)

Dennis Joseph Enright brought an international perspective to The Movement, having spent much of his career teaching in universities across Asia, Europe, and Egypt before returning to Britain in the 1970s. Enright's poetry appears in collections including "The Laughing Hyena" (1953), "Some Men Are Brothers" (1960), and "Collected Poems 1948-1998" (1998). His work combines Movement clarity and restraint with humour and a cosmopolitan outlook informed by his extensive international experience. Poems like "The Laughing Hyena" employ a deceptively simple style to explore complex ethical and philosophical questions.

Beyond poetry, Enright was an accomplished academic, critic, novelist, and editor. He edited important anthologies, including "Poets of the 1950s" (1955), which, like Conquest's "New Lines," helped define The Movement's identity. His critical works, such as "The Alluring Problem" (1986), examine literature with the same clarity and intelligence that characterise his poetry.

Enright's international perspective distinguishes him somewhat from other Movement poets. His experiences in Japan, Singapore, Thailand, and elsewhere informed both his poetry and his prose works, including memoirs like "Memoirs of a Mendicant Professor" (1969). This global outlook broadened the typically British focus of Movement writing without abandoning its fundamental principles of clarity and intellectual engagement.

13.18 CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MOVEMENT

Formal Innovation and Tradition

The Movement's approach to poetic form represents a nuanced negotiation between tradition and innovation. Rather than rejecting traditional forms outright, as some modernist poets had done, Movement poets often worked within established formal structures—sonnets, quatrains, regular stanzaic patterns—while adapting them to contemporary purposes and sensibilities.

This formal conservatism was not mere nostalgia but reflected philosophical commitments. Traditional forms provided discipline and structure that Movement poets valued for intellectual and aesthetic reasons. By working within established patterns, they demonstrated continuity with poetic tradition while addressing contemporary concerns in accessible language.

However, Movement poets were not rigid formalists. They adapted traditional forms to suit their purposes, often employing a more relaxed, conversational tone within formal structures. Philip Larkin's "Church Going," for example, uses a regular seven-line stanza pattern but maintains a meditative, almost casual voice that belies its careful construction.

The Movement's formal approach contrasted with both the free verse experiments of high modernism and the emotionally charged, sometimes metrically loose work of neo-romantic poets. Their middle path—neither revolutionary nor reactionary—reflected their broader cultural positioning between traditional values and modern realities.

Language and Diction

The Movement placed particular emphasis on clarity, precision, and accessibility in poetic language. Movement poets rejected both the deliberately difficult allusions of high modernism and the emotionally charged language of neo-romanticism in favour of what Donald Davie called "purity of diction"—language that communicated clearly without drawing attention to itself as language.

This preference for clarity did not mean simplistic or prosaic expression. Movement poets employed sophisticated vocabulary and syntax but valued communication over linguistic display. They cultivated what Davie described as a "neutral tone," avoiding both elevated poetic diction and colloquial slang in favour of precise, Standard English.

This approach to language reflected The Movement's skepticism toward claims of special poetic insight or privileged perspective. By using accessible language, they positioned poetry as a mode of communication rather than mystical revelation. This democratising impulse made their work more accessible to general readers while maintaining intellectual rigor.

Movement poetry's linguistic clarity should not be confused with emotional simplicity. Poets like Larkin and Jennings addressed complex emotional states but did so through precise description and analysis rather than emotional effusion. Their restraint often heightened emotional impact by avoiding sentimentality or melodrama.

Empiricism and Rationality

The Movement exhibited a strongly empirical orientation, preferring concrete observation and rational analysis over abstract theorising or mystical intuition. Movement poets typically began with observable reality—physical objects, human behavior, specific locations—and moved from these particulars toward broader reflections.

This empirical approach reflected philosophical commitments influenced by British empiricist traditions. Movement poets generally distrusted grand systems and theories, preferring to build understanding from observed experience. Robert Conquest's introduction to "New Lines" emphasised this empirical sensibility as a defining characteristic of Movement poetry.

Rationality complemented empiricism in Movement work. These poets valued logical analysis and intellectual clarity, often employing irony as a tool for examining experience. Their poetry frequently demonstrates a process of thinking through experience rather than merely expressing emotional reactions to it.

This rational, empirical orientation did not preclude emotional or spiritual concerns. Elizabeth Jennings's religious poetry, for example, examines spiritual experience with the same clarity and precision applied to other subjects. The difference lies in approach—analysing rather than merely asserting or evoking these experiences.

Skepticism and Irony

A skeptical outlook pervades much Movement poetry, questioning grand claims, systems, and certainties. This skepticism operates not as cynicism but as a form of intellectual honesty—a refusal to claim more certainty than experience warrants. Larkin's poetry exemplifies this quality, examining human experiences like love, work, and religion with a skeptical eye that acknowledges both their value and their limitations.

Irony serves as a key tool in this skeptical approach. Movement poets employed irony not merely as verbal cleverness but as a means of maintaining intellectual distance and examining experience from multiple perspectives. Their irony often involves the recognition of contradiction or limitation rather than simple mockery or dismissal.

The Movement's skepticism extended to political ideologies and utopian visions. Having witnessed the failures of political extremism in the 1930s and 40s, many Movement poets distrusted grand political narratives and revolutionary promises. This political skepticism sometimes led to characterisations of The Movement as politically conservative, though in reality, their positions ranged across the political spectrum.

This skeptical stance also informed Movement poets' view of their own art. They generally avoided claims about poetry's transformative or prophetic powers, preferring to see it as a means of clarifying experience and communicating insight. This modesty about poetry's scope and function distinguished them from both romantic conceptions of the poet as visionary and modernist assertions of poetry's cultural importance.

Anti-Romanticism and Cultural Politics

The Movement defined itself partly in opposition to romanticism, particularly the neo-romantic tendencies of immediate post-war poetry. Movement poets rejected what they saw as romantic excesses: emotional effusion, claims of special insight, worship of nature, and elevation of imagination over intellect.

This anti-romantic stance had cultural and political dimensions. The Movement emerged during a period of British cultural retrenchment following the War, when imperial decline and economic challenges led to reassessment of national identity and values. Movement poetry's emphasis on clarity, restraint, and rationality represented a particular response to this cultural moment—neither nostalgic for imperial grandeur nor revolutionary in outlook.

The cultural politics of The Movement were complex and sometimes contradictory. While often characterised as conservative, Movement poets varied in their political views and commitments. What united them was less specific political positions than a general skepticism toward political extremes and utopian promises. Their poetry typically addresses politics obliquely, through examination of individual experience rather than direct advocacy.

This political ambiguity has led to varied interpretations of The Movement's cultural significance. Some critics view it as representing a narrowing of poetic vision after modernism's international outlook, retreating into English provincialism. Others see it as a necessary correction to modernist abstraction, reconnecting poetry with ordinary experience and accessible language. Both interpretations contain elements of truth, reflecting The Movement's complex positioning within Mid-Twentieth- Century British culture.

Social Concerns and Everyday Experience

Despite their reputation for emotional restraint, Movement poets engaged deeply with social issues and everyday experiences. Their poetry examines class, education, work, relationships, and social change with analytical precision rather than political polemic or emotional outcry.

Larkin's poetry, for example, explores social change in post-war Britain with remarkable subtlety. Poems like "MCMXIV" examine the loss of pre-war innocence through images of men queuing to enlist in 1914, while "High Windows" considers the sexual revolution of the 1960s with a mixture of envy and skepticism. "The Whitsun Weddings" portrays ordinary people's rituals and aspirations with meticulous attention to detail and social context.

Kingsley Amis's work, both poetry and prose, often satirises class pretensions and social hypocrisy. His novel "Lucky Jim" examines class and education through its protagonist's awkward navigation of academic social hierarchies. His poetry similarly explores social occasions and interactions with a sharp eye for pretension and authenticity.

Elizabeth Jennings brings particular attention to interpersonal relationships, examining connections between individuals with psychological insight and emotional honesty. Her poems explore friendship, love, family relationships, and communal experiences with characteristic precision and restraint.

The Movement's attention to everyday experience reflected philosophical commitments but also social reality. These poets generally came from middle-class backgrounds and often worked in academic or professional settings. Their poetry reflects these experiences—university life, office work, and suburban domesticity— treating them as worthy of serious poetic attention rather than dismissing them as prosaic or bourgeois.

This focus on everyday experience has led some critics to characterise Movement poetry as provincial or limited in scope. However, this view underestimates the philosophical depth and social insight these poets brought to examination of ordinary life. By treating everyday experiences with serious attention, they demonstrated that poetry could address contemporary social reality without resorting to political grandstanding or experimental obscurity.

13.19 LET'S SUM UP

The 20th Century marked a profound transformation in literary expression, characterised by multiple movements that emerged in response to changing social, political, and philosophical landscapes. From the genteel traditionalism of Georgian Poetry to the terse precision of Imagism, from the suggestive indirection of Symbolism to the clarity and restraint of The Movement, these literary currents reflected both continuity with tradition and radical breaks from the past.

The literary movements of the 20th Century—including Georgian Poetry, Imagism, Symbolism, and The Movement—collectively transformed how we read and write poetry in English. Each contributed distinct techniques, perspectives, and sensibilities that continue to influence contemporary practice.

Georgian Poetry, though often dismissed as merely transitional, preserved a valuable tradition of nature observation and celebration of ordinary experience that remains relevant in our increasingly urbanised world. Poets like Edward Thomas continue to be read for their authentic engagement with landscape and quiet psychological depth. Imagism's revolution in poetic technique—its insistence on precision, economy, and concrete imagery—permanently changed how poets approach their craft. Contemporary poetry's emphasis on showing rather than telling, on compression and exactitude, owes much to Imagist principles. Symbolism's exploration of suggestion, indirection, and psychological complexity expanded poetry's capacity to express the ineffable and unconscious dimensions of experience. Its techniques continue to inform poetry that seeks to move beyond literal meaning toward more elusive truths. The Movement's reaffirmation of clarity, irony, and formal control provided an important counterbalance to experimental excesses while demonstrating how traditional techniques could address contemporary experience. Philip Larkin's enduring popularity testifies to the continuing appeal of accessible yet profound poetry grounded in shared experience.

Together, these movements demonstrate how literary history proceeds not by simple progress but through productive tensions—between tradition and innovation, emotion and intellect, locality and universality. The diversity of 20th- Century poetry reflects the Century's complex challenges, as poets sought meaningful expression in a rapidly changing world. Their collective achievement was to expand the resources of language to address the full range of modern experience, from its traumas and dislocations to its moments of beauty and transcendence.

In our contemporary literary landscape, elements of all these movements continue to reverberate, as poets draw on their diverse techniques and perspectives to address the challenges of the 21st Century. Understanding these movements enriches our reading of both historical and contemporary poetry, revealing the ongoing conversation between past and present that keeps literature vital and relevant. In this way, this Movement emerged as a reaction against the sentimentality and ornate style of Victorian Poetry, seeking to capture the essence of an experience or object with minimal words.

13.20 QUESTIONS

- Discuss in brief about the 20th Century literature and its main features.
- Write a short note on Georgian Poetry.
- What are the main features of Georgian Poetry?
- Write a note about Sassoon's contribution to Georgian Poetry.
- What is the importance of Imagism in literature?
- Analyse the importance of The Poets' Club in the development of the Imagist Poetry.
- Evaluate the contribution of Ezra Pound and Hilda Doolittle in the development of the Imagist Poetry.
- What is the importance of Symbolism in the 20th Century literature?
- Attempt a short note on the emergence of Symbolism.
- Analyse the contribution of Baudelaire and W.B. Yeats towards Symbolism.
- What do you understand by the term "The Movement" in literature?
- Who were the major practitioners of The Movement?

- What are the chief characteristics of The Movement?

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UNIT-14

20th CENTURY NOVEL – STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS, PSYCHOLOGICAL, CAMPUS NOVEL

Structure

14.0 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this unit are to:

- Introduce learners to the history and development of novel in the 20th Century.
- Analyse different forms of novel.
- Emergence and salient features of the Stream of Consciousness, the Psychological and the Campus novels.
- Analyse the importance of these novels in literature.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

The 20th Century witnessed unprecedented evolution in the novel as a literary form. From the modernist experiments of the early 1900s to the postmodern playfulness of later decades, this period produced some of the most influential works in literary history. As the Century began, novelists were breaking from Victorian conventions. James Joyce's "Ulysses" (1922) revolutionised literature with its stream-of-consciousness technique and complex structure. Virginia Woolf's "Mrs. Dalloway" (1925) similarly explored interior consciousness while experimenting with time. Meanwhile, Franz Kafka's surreal, nightmarish visions in works like "The Metamorphosis" (1915) and "The Trial" (posthumously published in 1925) captured the alienation of modern existence. Joseph Conrad's "Heart of Darkness" (1902) explored colonialism's darkness while pioneering narrative ambiguity. E.M. Forster's "A Passage to India" (1924) examined British imperialism and cultural divides with nuanced characterisation.

The interwar period saw novelists responding to global trauma. Ernest Hemingway's terse, understated style in "The Sun Also Rises" (1926) and "A Farewell to Arms" (1929) reflected the disillusionment of the "Lost Generation." F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby" (1925) critiqued the American Dream through its portrayal of wealth and moral emptiness. William Faulkner's experimental novels like "The Sound and the Fury" (1929) and "As I Lay Dying" (1930) employed multiple perspectives and non-linear narratives while exploring the American South. John Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath" (1939) documented the Great Depression's impact on migrant workers with stark realism.

The World War II and its aftermath profoundly influenced fiction. Albert Camus's "The Stranger" (1942) embodied existentialist philosophy in its detached protagonist. George Orwell's dystopian "Nineteen Eighty-Four" (1949) warned of totalitarianism and remains startlingly relevant. Ray Bradbury's "Fahrenheit 451" (1953) similarly cautioned against censorship and anti-

intellectualism. International literature flourished with works like Gabriel García Márquez's "One Hundred Years of Solitude" (1967), which pioneered magical realism, blending fantastical elements with reality to portray Colombian history.

The Century's close saw an explosion of diverse perspectives. Haruki Murakami blended Western influences with Japanese sensibilities in works like "The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle" (1994-95). Arundhati Roy's "The God of Small Things" (1997) explored India's caste system through lyrical prose. Chinua Achebe's "Things Fall Apart" (1958, but influential throughout the Century) challenged Western narratives about Africa. Postcolonial literature flourished with writers like V.S. Naipaul, Zadie Smith, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie examining cultural identity and displacement. Michael Ondaatje's "The English Patient" (1992) blended poetry and prose in its exploration of national identity during wartime.

Technological innovations changed not only how novels were written but also how they were read and distributed. The 20th Century novel's most significant achievement may be its malleability—its ability to absorb new voices, techniques, and concerns while maintaining its fundamental role as a vehicle for human stories. From modernism to postmodernism, realism to magical realism, the novel proved its remarkable adaptability. As the Century closed, digital technology was already beginning to influence both the form and content of fiction, setting the stage for further evolution in the 21st Century.

14.2 THE 20th CENTURY NOVEL

The 20th Century was an era of dramatic social, political, and technological upheavals, and these changes were reflected in the literature of the time, especially in the novel. The novel as a literary form underwent profound transformations as it adapted to the shifting landscapes of modernity, world wars, revolutions, colonialism, and the rise of the mass media. This period was one of experimentation, with writers pushing the boundaries of narrative form, style, and content. The historical background of the 20th- Century novel is intricately connected to the broader events of the Century, making the novel an essential medium for understanding the complexities of the modern world.

14.3 THE EARLY 20th CENTURY

At the beginning of the 20th Century, the world was caught in a process of rapid modernization, with technological advancements such as the automobile, the airplane, and the telephone reshaping daily life. These innovations, along with developments in Physics (like Einstein's theory of relativity) and Psychology (as exemplified by Freud's theories on the unconscious), created a profound sense of disorientation in society. The stability of the 19th Century, with its Victorian ideals of progress, was giving way to a more fragmented, uncertain view of the world.

The First World War (1914-1918) served as a crucial turning point. The War devastated Europe, leaving millions dead, economies in ruins, and national borders redrawn. The trauma of the War shattered old certainties and led to a collective disillusionment with traditional values, institutions, and narratives. Writers responded by rejecting the conventions of 19th- Century realism, which had focused on clear plots and moral lessons. Instead, they embraced modernism, a movement that sought to break free from the past and explore the inner workings of the human mind, the complexities of perception, and the fragmented nature of reality. Modernist writers were influenced by new theories in philosophy, psychology, and art. The works of Sigmund Freud, particularly his ideas about the unconscious and repression, had a profound impact on literature, leading to an exploration of internal landscapes and the unconscious mind in ways that had not been

seen before. This is evident in James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), where the Stream of Consciousness Technique is used to depict the characters' unfiltered thoughts and perceptions, reflecting the fragmented nature of modern experience. Virginia Woolf also utilized this technique in novels such as *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) and *To the Lighthouse* (1927), where she explored the fluidity of time and the complexity of human consciousness.

In addition to psychological insights, modernist writers were also inspired by changes in art, particularly in painting and poetry. Cubism, with its fragmented representations of reality, and the symbolism and imagism in poetry helped to shape the novel's new forms. Modernist works often featured non-linear narratives, unreliable narrators, and an emphasis on the subjective nature of reality. This shift was not just a response to the dislocations caused by the war but also an attempt to understand a world in which traditional ways of making sense of experience no longer seemed sufficient. Writers such as T.S. Eliot, who wrote *The Waste Land* (1922), captured the sense of fragmentation and alienation in post-war society. Eliot's use of a fragmented, collage-like structure in his poetry mirrored the fragmented nature of modern life, where individuals seemed disconnected from the broader cultural narratives and communities that had once provided meaning.

14.4 THE INTERWAR PERIOD

The interwar years were marked by the rise of totalitarian regimes, the spread of fascism, and the failure of democratic institutions in many parts of the world. In Russia, the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 had resulted in the establishment of the Soviet Union, a state that promised to reshape society according to Marxist ideals. In Italy and Germany, Mussolini and Hitler respectively rose to power in the 1920s and 1930s, establishing fascist regimes that sought to assert authoritarian control over every aspect of life. These political movements had a profound impact on the literature of the time. In response to the political instability and the rise of fascism, many writers turned to the novel as a means of exploring the dangers of totalitarianism. George Orwell's *1984* (1949) and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) are two famous examples of dystopian fiction that depict the terrifying consequences of authoritarian regimes. These novels, written in the interwar and early postwar periods, examined the ways in which totalitarian governments could manipulate reality, suppress individual freedoms, and maintain control over populations through surveillance and propaganda. The interwar period was also marked by the rise of the Left and the spread of Marxist ideas, especially in response to the inequality and exploitation that were seen as inherent in capitalist systems. Many writers were drawn to socialist and communist ideologies, and literature became a platform for political activism. Works like John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), which depicted the plight of migrant workers during the Great Depression, and the novels of Ernest Hemingway, who wrote about the Spanish Civil War, showed how literature could serve as a tool for social critique and political engagement. However, not all writers were aligned with left-wing ideologies. The period also saw the rise of right-wing literary movements, particularly in Europe, where writers like Ezra Pound and the Italian novelist Curzio Malaparte were associated with fascism. These writers sought to create literature that would support the new authoritarian regimes, which they saw as necessary responses to the chaos and instability of the times.

14.5 THE POST-WAR PERIOD

The Second World War (1939-1945) left an even deeper scar on the world than the First World War had. The war's scale, the Holocaust, and the use of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki represented the height of human technological achievement turned toward destruction. In its aftermath, writers grappled with the moral and existential questions raised by these atrocities.

The novel became a means of exploring not only the political and social repercussions of the war but also the psychological effects on individuals and communities. In the post-war years, existentialism became a dominant philosophical and literary movement. Existentialist writers, influenced by figures like, Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, explored themes of alienation, freedom, and the meaninglessness of existence. In novels such as Camus's *The Stranger* (1942), the protagonist is a man who feels detached from the social norms around him and ultimately confronts the absurdity of life itself. Sartre's *Nausea* (1938) similarly focuses on a character's experience of existential dread and the overwhelming realization of life's inherent meaninglessness. The post-war period also saw the emergence of postmodernism, a movement that rejected the certainties of modernism and embraced skepticism, irony, and a focus on the instability of meaning. Postmodernist writers questioned the very idea of a stable narrative or a coherent self. Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973), for example, is a sprawling, fragmented novel that defies traditional narrative structure and explores themes of paranoia, technology, and the failure of human agency in the face of overwhelming systems of control. In addition to these philosophical developments, the post-war period was also marked by the process of decolonization. Many countries in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean gained independence from European colonial powers, leading to the emergence of new national literatures. The novels of authors like Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, and Jean Rhys explored the legacies of colonialism and the struggles of newly independent nations to forge their identities in the post-colonial world. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) is a classic example of how the novel could be used to critique colonialism from the perspective of the colonized. In the United States, the Civil Rights Movement and the struggle for racial equality were central to the literary scene. African American writers like Ralph Ellison, Richard Wright, and Toni Morrison used the novel to explore issues of race, identity, and social justice. Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), for example, addresses the haunting legacy of slavery and its psychological and cultural effects on African Americans in the post-Civil War Era.

By the end of the 20th Century, the novel had evolved in a variety of ways, reflecting the many social, political, and technological changes of the time. The novel had become a global phenomenon, with writers from all over the world contributing to the literary landscape. The Century had seen the rise of new forms and styles, from the stream of consciousness of modernism to the fragmented, postmodern narrative. It had also witnessed the deepening of the novel's engagement with issues of race, gender, identity, and power. As the 20th Century drew to a close, the novel was in many ways at a crossroads. It had moved far from its origins in the 18th and 19th Centuries, with its more linear plots and clear moral messages. The postmodern era, with its focus on ambiguity, irony, and the questioning of traditional structures, suggested that the novel might not be as central to literary culture as it once had been. However, the novel had also proven itself to be a versatile and resilient form, capable of adapting to the changing needs and concerns of each new era. The 20th Century was a time of extraordinary transformation, and the novel, as a literary form, played a key role in reflecting and shaping those changes. Whether through the exploration of modernist themes of fragmentation and alienation, the post-war emphasis on existential questions, or the postcolonial critique of imperialism, the 20th- Century novel remains an essential part of our understanding of this tumultuous period in history.

14.6 THE STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS NOVEL

The stream of consciousness novel represents one of the most innovative and transformative approaches to narrative storytelling in modern literature. Emerging in the early 20th Century, this literary technique fundamentally challenged traditional narrative structures by attempting to capture the intricate, non-linear, and often fragmented nature of human thought and consciousness. Unlike conventional narrative forms that presented a structured, chronological account of events, stream of

consciousness writing sought to mirror the complex inner workings of the human mind, revealing the intricate web of memories, sensations, associations, and subconscious thoughts that continuously flow through an individual's psyche. It gained prominence in modernist literature as a way to delve into the inner lives of characters. Key examples include James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*.

14.6.1 Origin

The term "Stream of Consciousness" was first coined by psychologist William James in his seminal work "The Principles of Psychology" (1890). James described consciousness as a continuous flow of thoughts and sensations, challenging the prevailing notion that mental processes were discrete and linear. His philosophical and psychological insights provided the theoretical groundwork for a revolutionary approach to literary representation of inner mental experiences.

The technique emerged as a direct response to the limitations of traditional realist narratives, which struggled to capture the nuanced complexity of human psychological experience. Writers began to experiment with narrative techniques that could more authentically represent the mind's intricate processes, including the seemingly random associations, fragmented memories, and instantaneous shifts in perception that characterise human thought.

The development of Stream of Consciousness novels was deeply influenced by contemporaneous developments in psychology and philosophy. Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theories, particularly his exploration of the unconscious mind, provided crucial insights into the complex nature of human thought. The work of philosophers like Henri Bergson, with his concept of "durée" or pure duration, also played a significant role. Bergson argued that time is not a series of discrete moments but a continuous flow, a perspective that resonated deeply with Stream of Consciousness writers' narrative approach.

14.6.2 Salient features

Psychological Authenticity

These novels prioritise internal mental experiences over external events, presenting characters' thoughts in their raw, unfiltered state. The narrative mimics the mind's natural tendency to jump between past and present, reality and imagination, with little regard for conventional logical progression.

Non-Linear Narrative

Traditional narrative chronology is abandoned in favour of a more fluid, associative structure. Thoughts are presented as they emerge in the mind, creating a complex tapestry of memories, sensations, and reflections that may not follow a strict temporal or logical sequence.

Interior Monologue

Characters' inner thoughts are presented directly, often without traditional punctuation or grammatical constraints. This technique allows readers to experience the character's consciousness as an immediate, unmediated stream of perceptions and reflections.

Language Experimentation

Writers frequently employ innovative linguistic techniques, including extensive use of free indirect discourse, interior monologue, and experimental syntax to represent the mind's complex cognitive processes.

14.7 MAJOR WRITERS

14.7.1 James Joyce (1882-1941)

No discussion of Stream of Consciousness Literature would be complete without acknowledging James Joyce, arguably the most influential practitioner of this narrative technique. Born in Dublin, Ireland, Joyce revolutionised modern literature through his groundbreaking works that pushed the boundaries of narrative representation.

His novel "Ulysses" (1922), stands as the quintessential Stream Consciousness masterpiece. The novel follows Leopold Bloom's experiences in Dublin on a single day, June 16, 1904, presenting his thoughts, memories, and perceptions in an intricate, almost musical linguistic composition. The final chapter, featuring Molly Bloom's interior monologue, is particularly renowned for its uninterrupted, punctuation-free exploration of consciousness.

Joyce's earlier work "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" (1916) also demonstrates significant stream of consciousness techniques, tracing the psychological development of Stephen Dedalus from childhood to young adulthood through an evolving narrative style that mirrors the protagonist's intellectual and emotional growth.

14.7.2 Virginia Woolf (1882-1941)

A contemporary of Joyce and a central figure in the modernist literary movement, Virginia Woolf refined the Stream of Consciousness Technique, particularly in her exploration of female consciousness and inner experience. Her novels represent a nuanced, lyrical approach to representing psychological interiority.

"Mrs. Dalloway" (1925) is perhaps her most celebrated work in this genre. The novel follows Clarissa Dalloway's preparations for an evening party, simultaneously tracking her memories, reflections, and interconnected thoughts. Woolf employs a shifting narrative perspective that moves seamlessly between characters' consciousnesses, creating a complex, multi-layered psychological landscape.

"To the Lighthouse" (1927) further demonstrates Woolf's mastery of stream of consciousness. The novel explores the Ramsay family's dynamics through an intricate representation of characters' inner lives, with particular emphasis on the passage of time and the fluid nature of memory and perception.

14.7.3 Marcel Proust (1871-1922)

Though predating the term "Stream of Consciousness," Marcel Proust's monumental work "In Search of Lost Time" (also translated as "Remembrance of Things Past") (1913-1927) is considered a foundational text in exploring memory and consciousness.

The Seven-Volume novel is a profound meditation on memory, time, and perception. Proust's narrator explores how sensory experiences trigger memories, demonstrating how consciousness is not a linear progression but a complex web of associations and recollections. The famous madeleine episode, where a taste triggers an extensive memory sequence, has become emblematic of the stream of consciousness approach.

14.7.4 Dorothy Richardson (1873-1957)

Often overlooked, Dorothy Richardson is credited with being the first English novelist to consistently use Stream of Consciousness as a primary narrative technique. Her novel sequence

"Pilgrimage" (1915-1967), published in thirteen volumes, follows the protagonist Miriam Henderson's psychological development.

Richardson's work significantly influenced both Joyce and Woolf, demonstrating a distinctly feminine approach to interior narrative. Her technique emphasized the moment-to-moment fluidity of consciousness, capturing the subtle nuances of perception and thought.

Stream of Consciousness Techniques have had a profound and lasting impact on literature. Contemporary writers continue to experiment with and adapt these narrative strategies, demonstrating the technique's enduring relevance in exploring human psychological complexity. Authors like Toni Morrison in "Beloved" (1987), David Foster Wallace in "Infinite Jest" (1996), and Ali Smith in her experimental novels have all incorporated stream of consciousness elements, proving the technique's ongoing significance in representing inner experience. The Stream of Consciousness novel represents more than a mere literary technique; it is a profound philosophical and artistic exploration of human consciousness. By prioritising internal experience over external events, these works challenge readers to engage with narrative in a more intimate, introspective manner.

These novels remind us that consciousness is not a neat, orderly process but a complex, often chaotic stream of thoughts, memories, and sensations. They invite us to embrace the beautiful complexity of human thought, celebrating the rich inner worlds that exist beneath the surface of everyday experience.

14.8 THE PSYCHOLOGICAL NOVEL

The psychological novel represents a profound literary innovation that emerged as a transformative genre in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. This intricate form of narrative literature fundamentally revolutionized the way writers approached character development, human consciousness, and the intricate landscapes of inner mental and emotional experiences. Unlike traditional narrative forms that primarily focused on external events and actions, the psychological novel delves deep into the protagonist's inner world, exploring the complex motivations, subconscious drives, and nuanced psychological states that shape human behaviour.

14.8.1 Historical Context

The roots of the psychological novel can be traced to the broader intellectual and cultural movements of the late 19th Century, particularly the emergence of psychoanalysis and modern psychology. The groundbreaking work of Sigmund Freud, with his revolutionary theories of the unconscious mind, dreams, and psychological mechanisms, provided writers with a new lens through which to understand human behavior and motivation. Similarly, the philosophical works of Wilhelm Dilthey and William James, which emphasised the importance of subjective experience and inner consciousness, created an intellectual environment conducive to the development of this genre. The psychological novel emerged as a direct response to the limitations of realist and naturalist writing styles that predominantly emphasised external descriptions and social observations. Writers began to recognise that true character representation required a more nuanced exploration of inner psychological landscapes. This shift was not merely a literary technique but a profound philosophical and artistic statement about the complexity of human experience.

14.8.2 Chief Characteristics

Interior Monologue and Stream of Consciousness

A defining characteristic of psychological novels is the extensive use of Interior Monologue and Stream of Consciousness Techniques. These narrative methods allow writers to

represent thought processes in their most unfiltered, spontaneous form. Unlike traditional third-person narration, these techniques capture the non-linear, associative nature of human thought. Interior monologue reveals characters' innermost thoughts, fears, desires, and contradictions. It demonstrates that consciousness is not a coherent, logical process but a complex web of memories, emotions, and half-formed ideas. Writers like Proust and Joyce showed that thoughts do not follow a linear path but jump between past, present, and imagined scenarios.

Psychological Depth and Complex Characterisation

Psychological novels prioritise depth of character over plot progression. Characters are not defined by their actions but by their internal struggles, motivations, and psychological complexities. The focus shifts from external events to the characters' interpretations and emotional responses to these events. This approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of human behavior. Characters are presented as multi-dimensional beings, with their actions explained through their psychological makeup, childhood experiences, unconscious desires, and societal influences.

Non-Linear Narrative Structures

Traditional narrative structures, with their emphasis on chronological progression and clear cause-and-effect relationships, are abandoned in psychological novels. Time becomes subjective, with narratives moving fluidly between different temporal moments based on characters' memories and psychological associations. This non-linear approach reflects contemporary psychological understanding that human experience is not sequential but interconnected and layered. Memories, traumas, and emotional experiences do not follow a straight line but intersect and influence each other in complex ways.

Exploration of Unconscious and Subconscious

Influenced by psychoanalytic theories, psychological novels delve deep into characters' unconscious and subconscious realms. Dreams, repressed memories, and seemingly irrational behaviours are explored as meaningful expressions of deeper psychological processes. Writers use various techniques to represent unconscious content: symbolic imagery, dream sequences, fragmented memories, and moments of unexpected psychological revelation. These techniques demonstrate that human behavior is not always rational but driven by complex, often hidden psychological forces.

Subjective Perception and Relativism

Psychological novels challenge the notion of objective reality, presenting experience as fundamentally subjective. Different characters might perceive the same event entirely different, reflecting the relativity of human perception. This approach undermines traditional narrative authority, suggesting that truth is not absolute but depends on individual psychological frameworks. Each character's perspective is valid, creating a rich, multifaceted understanding of human experience.

14.9 MAJOR WRITERS

14.9.1 Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881)

Widely considered a pioneering figure in the Psychological Novel, Fyodor Dostoevsky fundamentally transformed literary approaches to human psychology. His works penetrate the deepest recesses of human consciousness, exploring moral and psychological dilemmas with unprecedented depth. His major works include: "Crime and Punishment" (1866), "The Brothers Karamazov" (1880) and "Notes from Underground" (1864).

Dostoevsky's novels are profound psychological investigations that explore themes of guilt, redemption, moral complexity, and the intricate relationships between individual psychology and broader social and philosophical questions. In "Crime and Punishment," for instance, the protagonist Raskolnikov's psychological journey becomes a complex exploration of moral rationalisation, guilt, and psychological disintegration.

14.9.2 Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910)

Leo Tolstoy expanded the psychological novel's scope, creating intricate narratives that combined psychological insight with sweeping historical perspectives. His characters are deeply introspective, their inner lives meticulously examined against broader social and historical backdrops. His significant works are: "War and Peace" (1869), "Anna Karenina" (1877) and "The Death of Ivan Ilyich" (1886)

Tolstoy's approach to psychological exploration is remarkable for its nuanced understanding of human motivation. In "Anna Karenina," he creates a profoundly empathetic portrayal of a woman's psychological struggle against societal constraints, exploring her internal conflicts with extraordinary psychological complexity.

14.9.3 Marcel Proust (1871-1922)

Marcel Proust's monumental work "In Search of Lost Time" (À la recherché du temps perdu) stands as a cornerstone of psychological fiction. Published between 1913 and 1927, this Seven-Volume Novel is a profound exploration of memory, perception, and the subjective nature of experience. Proust's innovative narrative technique, characterised by long, meandering sentences and Stream of Consciousness, allows readers to inhabit the narrator's inner world.

The novel's central metaphor—the famous Madeleine Cake Episode—illustrates how sensory experiences can trigger profound memory retrieval, blurring the boundaries between past and present. Proust demonstrates how memory is not a linear process but a complex, non-chronological experience shaped by emotion, perception, and involuntary recollection.

14.9.4 James Joyce (1882-1941)

James Joyce's "Ulysses" (1922) represents another landmark in psychological fiction. The novel follows Leopold Bloom's single day in Dublin, employing Stream of Consciousness and Interior Monologue to reveal the intricate thought processes of its characters. Joyce's work challenges traditional narrative conventions, presenting consciousness as a fluid, non-linear phenomenon.

In "Ulysses," Joyce employs various stylistic techniques to represent different psychological states. The novel's structure mirrors the complexity of human consciousness, with each chapter employing a unique narrative style and perspective. This approach allows readers to experience the characters' inner worlds with unprecedented intimacy and complexity.

14.9.5 Virginia Woolf (1882-1941)

Virginia Woolf is perhaps the most celebrated female writer of the Psychological Novel, known for her profound explorations of consciousness, particularly female experience. Her narrative techniques transformed literary approaches to psychological representation. Woolf's novels are landmarks in psychological exploration, particularly in their representation of female inner life. Her Stream of Consciousness Technique allows for a nuanced, multi-layered representation of psychological experience that goes far beyond traditional narrative approaches. Novels like "Mrs. Dalloway" (1925) and "To the Lighthouse" (1927) demonstrate her mastery of the Stream of Consciousness Technique.

Woolf's characters are not defined by external actions but by their rich inner lives. In "Mrs. Dalloway," the narrative moves fluidly between different characters' perspectives, revealing how individual consciousness is simultaneously personal and interconnected. Her writing challenges traditional gender narratives, presenting complex, multifaceted female characters whose inner worlds are as rich and dynamic as their male counterparts.

14.9.6 Franz Kafka (1883-1924)

Franz Kafka's works, such as "The Metamorphosis" (1915) and "The Trial" (1925), represent Psychological Fiction from a distinctly existential perspective. Kafka explores themes of alienation, bureaucratic oppression, and the individual's struggle against incomprehensible systems.

In "The Metamorphosis," the protagonist Gregor Samsa's transformation into a giant insect becomes a powerful metaphor for psychological estrangement and social marginalisation. Kafka's narratives blur the lines between reality and nightmare, presenting psychological states that are simultaneously deeply personal and universally resonant.

14.9.7 William Faulkner (1897-1962)

William Faulkner's works, particularly "The Sound and the Fury" (1929), represent a significant contribution to psychological fiction in the American context. Faulkner's narrative technique involves multiple perspectives and non-linear storytelling, capturing the fragmented consciousness of the Compson Family.

The novel's first section, narrated by Benjy, a mentally disabled character, demonstrates Faulkner's ability to represent consciousness in its most raw and unfiltered form. By presenting different perspectives and temporal shifts, Faulkner reveals how individual memories and perceptions shape collective and personal histories.

The 20th- Century Psychological Novel represents a profound transformation in literary expression. By prioritizing internal landscapes over external events, these works offer readers a deep, empathetic understanding of human complexity. They reflect the Century's major intellectual and psychological discoveries, challenging traditional narrative conventions and expanding the possibilities of literary representation.

Psychological Novels remind us that human experience is infinitely more complex than surface-level interactions. They invite readers to look beyond actions and words, exploring the rich, often tumultuous inner worlds that shape individual and collective human experiences.

14.10 THE CAMPUS NOVEL

The campus novel, a distinctive and nuanced genre of literature, offers readers an intimate glimpse into the intricate world of academic life, intellectual pursuits, and the complex social dynamics that unfold within educational institutions. This genre provides a unique lens through which readers can explore the microcosm of university environments, examining the intellectual, emotional, and social landscapes that shape the experiences of students, professors, and academic communities.

The campus novel has been a beloved genre since the 1950s, with Mary McCarthy's "The Groves of Academe" (1952) considered the first modern example. These stories revolve around the lives of students and faculty members at a university, shedding light on the dynamics and quirks that can arise in this unique setting. While the traditional campus novel is known for its satirical nature, with authors using irony and humour to critique university institutions and academic culture,

more recent examples have delved into darker themes, such as Donna Tartt's "The Secret History" (1994).

14.11 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The origins of the campus novel can be traced back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, emerging as a literary form that reflected the expanding role of higher education in society. Initially, these novels were primarily written by academics or those intimately familiar with university life, serving as both a narrative exploration and a critical commentary on academic institutions.

The genre gained significant momentum in the Post-World War II Era, particularly in Anglo-American literature. This period saw a substantial expansion of higher education, with universities becoming increasingly diverse and complex social environments. The campus novel evolved from mere descriptive accounts to more sophisticated explorations of intellectual life, power dynamics, personal ambitions, and social transformations.

14.12 DEFINING THE CAMPUS NOVEL

A campus novel can be broadly defined as a work of fiction that primarily takes place within an academic setting, typically a university or college. These novels focus on the lives of students, faculty members, administrators, and other individuals connected to the academic world. The setting is not merely a backdrop but a crucial element that shapes the narrative, characters, and thematic concerns of the work.

14.13 SALIENT FEATURES

Setting and Environment

The university campus serves as more than just a physical location in these novels. It becomes a microcosm of broader social, intellectual, and cultural dynamics. The campus is portrayed as a complex ecosystem with its own hierarchies, rituals, traditions, and unwritten rules.

Character Development

Characters in campus novels are often intellectual, introspective, and wrestling with personal and professional challenges. They are typically defined by their academic pursuits, intellectual capabilities, and the complex interpersonal relationships that emerge within academic environments.

Intellectual Exploration

These novels frequently engage with intellectual discourse, exploring philosophical ideas, academic debates, and the pursuit of knowledge. They often delve into the internal lives of scholars, their research, and the complex motivations behind academic work.

Social Critique

Campus novels are not merely descriptive but often serve as critical commentaries on academic institutions, social hierarchies, intellectual trends, and broader societal issues. They expose the politics of academia, challenging romanticized notions of university life.

Humor and Satire

Many campus novels employ humour, irony, and satire to critique academic pretensions, institutional bureaucracies, and the often absurd nature of scholarly pursuits.

14.14 MAJOR WRITERS

14.14.1 Kingsley Amis (1922-1995)

Kingsley Amis was a prominent British novelist, poet, and literary critic who played a significant role in establishing the campus novel as a distinct genre. Born in London, Amis was educated at the University of Oxford and worked as a university lecturer before becoming a full-time writer.

Major Works

"Lucky Jim" (1954) Arguably Amis's most famous work and a seminal campus novel, "Lucky Jim" follows Jim Dixon, a frustrated junior lecturer in a provincial English university. The novel satirises academic pomposity, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and the social conventions of 1950s British academia.

"The Green Man," (1969) While not strictly a campus novel, this work demonstrates Amis's continued exploration of academic and intellectual themes, blending humour with supernatural elements.

14.14.2 David Lodge (1935-2022)

David Lodge was an English novelist, literary critic, and academic. He was a professor of English literature at the University of Birmingham and is renowned for his campus novels that provide insightful and humorous perspectives on academic life.

Major Works

"Changing Places" (1975) Part of Lodge's Campus Trilogy, this novel explores the exchange programme between an American and a British university professor, offering a witty commentary on cultural differences and academic conventions.

"Small World" (1984) another novel in the Campus Trilogy, this work satirises academic conferences, literary theory, and the global academic community.

"Nice Work" (1988) this novel examines the intersection of academia and industry, featuring a university lecturer and an industrial manager, providing a broader critique of British social and economic structures.

14.14.3 Malcolm Bradbury (1932-2000)

Malcolm Bradbury was a distinguished British novelist, academic, and television presenter. He was a professor of American Studies and played a crucial role in developing creative writing programs in British universities.

Major Works

"The History Man" (1975) Considered a landmark campus novel. This work provides a scathing critique of 1970s academic radicalism, exploring themes of political correctness, sexual politics, and intellectual fashions.

"Rates of Exchange" (1983), while not strictly a campus novel, this work continues Bradbury's exploration of academic and intellectual themes, focusing on a linguistics professor's experiences in Eastern Europe.

14.14.4 Donna Tartt (1963)

Donna Tartt is an American novelist known for her intricate, meticulously crafted novels that often explore dark, psychological themes. Her debut novel significantly contributed to the campus novel genre. Her novel "The Secret History" (1992), is a gothic campus novel set in a small, elite Vermont college, follows a group of classics students involved in a murder. It explores themes of intellectual obsession, elitism, and moral corruption.

14.14.5 Philip Roth (1933-2018)

Philip Roth was a prominent American novelist known for his exploration of Jewish-American identity and complex, often controversial narratives. Several of his works feature academic settings. His work "The Human Stain" (2000), although not a traditional campus novel, this work is set in an academic environment and explores themes of identity, political correctness, and racial passing.

While the campus novel tradition has been predominantly Anglo-American, contemporary writers from various cultural backgrounds have expanded the genre's scope. Writers from postcolonial contexts, for instance, have used the campus novel to explore themes of cultural identity, educational colonialism, and intellectual resistance. The campus novel remains a vital and dynamic genre, offering nuanced explorations of intellectual life, social dynamics, and personal growth. By providing intimate portrayals of academic environments, these novels continue to challenge, entertain, and provide critical insights into the complex world of higher education.

14.15 LET'S SUM UP

Throughout this unit we have discussed about the novel in the 20th Century and its different kinds viz., The Stream of Consciousness, The Psychological and The Campus. We have discussed also the emergence of these novels, their major writers and their significant works along with the impact of these novels.

The stream of consciousness approach challenged fundamental assumptions about narrative structure, presenting consciousness as a dynamic, ever-changing process rather than a static, predictable phenomenon. It invited readers to inhabit characters' minds intimately, experiencing their thoughts not as neatly organized sequences but as they actually occur—interrupted, associative, and deeply personal.

Unlike the Stream of Consciousness Technique, which focused on capturing thought processes, the psychological novel provided more structured insights into characters' mental and emotional worlds. These novels were characterised by intense introspection, detailed analysis of characters' psychological states, and a nuanced understanding of how past experiences shape present behaviours. They often employed sophisticated narrative techniques to reveal the hidden layers of human motivation, exploring themes of trauma, repression, desire, and psychological transformation.

The Campus novels were characterised by their keen satirical edge, often exposing the absurdities and pretensions of academic institutions. They combined intellectual discourse with sharp social commentary, using the university as a metaphorical stage where larger societal transformations could be examined. Characters were typically academics or students whose personal and professional lives became lenses through which broader cultural changes could be scrutinised.

While distinct in their approaches, these narrative styles shared a fundamental commitment to exploring human experience with unprecedented depth and complexity. They challenged

traditional narrative conventions, expanded the possibilities of literary representation, and offered profound insights into the intricate landscapes of human consciousness, psychology, and social experience.

These innovative approaches to novel writing have had lasting impacts on contemporary literature, continuing to inspire writers who seek to explore the rich, multifaceted nature of human experience beyond simplistic, linear narratives.

14.16 QUESTIONS

- Write a short note on the novel in the 20th Century.
- What is Stream of Consciousness Novel and its main characteristics?
- Who are the major writers of the Stream of Consciousness Novel?
- Attempt a short note on the Psychological Novel and its historical background.
- What are the salient features of the Psychological Novel?
- Who are the major contributors to the Psychological Novel?
- Define the Campus Novel with its main characteristics.
- Who are the major practitioners of the Campus Novel?

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UNIT-15

20th CENTURY DRAMA–PROBLEM PLAY, THEATRE OF THE ABSURD, EXPRESSIONISM, KITCHEN SINK DRAMA

Structure

15.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Know the rise of the drama as literary genre in the 20th Century
- Understand the importance of the drama in the 20th Century Literature
- Comprehend the different forms of the drama of the 20th Century
- Contribution of several writers in the growth of 20th Century Drama

15.1 INTRODUCTION

The Twentieth Century has been a period of literary revolutions; this is particularly noticeable in the realm of drama. So varied and so conflicting are the changes as and the trends, that if we search for one single epithet to apply to the modern stage, we are forced in the end to select the adjective 'electric'. During the Elizabethan, the Restoration, and other periods there were, no doubt considerable diversity in influences from without and in the flow of native theatrical currents, but when these are compared with corresponding conditions in the period between 1909 and 1990, they will inevitably appear simple and orderly. The chief trends may however be categorised as the realistic social drama, drama employing the comic and the fantastic, poetic drama, and finally the cluster involving angry plays, absurd plays and menace plays.

During the opening decades of the Century the social drama takes first place. In 1906 appeared *The Silver Box*, and with this play Galsworthy made the realistic social drama popular. Heroism comedy and fantasy are done away with. In the Silver Box a drunken young gentleman and an unemployed labourer are both involved in what are technically 'thefts' but only the later are punished. In "Justice" the machinery of justice ruins a clerk who is trying to rehabilitate himself after a prison sentence. In "Strife" he gives a disturbing picture of the bitterness resulting from a strike at a tin factory. The suffering that weighs on the starving men and their families is forcefully brought home. Galsworthy's compassion, his sensitivity to suffering and his sympathy for the underdog makes his message a compelling one.

Harley Granville-Barker, like Galsworthy wrote such realistic plays on social problems as *Waste* and *The Madras House*. In these plays a dominant social problem for the theme, but Granville-Barker differs from Galsworthy in his attempt to analyse the sentiments and passions of his characters. There were other realistic plays such as Mansfield's *The Tragedy of Man* which is tragic in its imparted Haskin's *The Return of the Prodigal*. But perhaps out of the best contemporary realistic tragedies is J.M. Synge's *Riders to the Sea* which is a play grant in its majestic simplicity. This also began the trend of one act realistic dramas.

By far the biggest revolution of the 20th Century English Drama was ushered in by George Bernard Shaw who started as an Ibsen-idolater and as an exponent of realism. Influenced by continental realistic playwrights, but only to a certain degree, he deliberately deviated from the realistic naturalistic cult of his contemporaries. A social propagandist and a man of ideas he was an almost impish creature constantly bubbling over with a sense of fun which constantly seeks to express in dramatic terms. The originality of his drama is not that he deals with social ideas but those who employees the comic, the fantastic and historical to express them. His chief weapons are the delight which ideas province and the shock which the often give.

Another dramatist, Shaw writing a drama on the theme of *Mrs. Warren's Profession* would have offered much pathos and plenty of sentimentalism. Shaw declares that sentimentalism itself lies at the root of evil. In *Arms and the Man* the chocolate soldier becomes the hero and in *Candida* the heroine decides to stay with the weaker man who is not the effeminate aesthetic young poet but the vigorous and self-opinionated preacher. In *Caesar and Cleopatra*, Cleopatra as a kittenish girl tyrannized over by an old nurse, and Caesar himself is a puzzled gentleman. In *Man and Superman* the woman is revealed as the huntress and Don Juan Janner is her poor victim. In this most famous of Shaw's play Janner is ultimately captured and Ann marries him even as he protests that he is not a happy man, the play is also full of fantastic elements for Janner and Straker land in hell, where Janner becomes Don Juan, the preacher of the intellectual philosophy of life.

Another dramatist who shows people in unreal situation is Sir James Barrie. In the Admirable Crichton the playwright takes what seems to be a fairly normal aristocratic household and imagines them on a desert island. Lord Loam is the symbol of the 'family and Crichton', the impeccable butler. In the desert Lord Loan and his aristocratic relatives proves themselves completely incapable of dealing with the new situation. Crichton alone shows himself capable of imentiveness. He performs everything and in doing these he becomes the aristocratic and the others accept him as the master. The first half of the 20th Century even in the midst of the trend towards realism developed a new kind of verse drama. Stephen Phillips began to write poetic tragedies such as Herod and Ulysses. The effect of Japanese no plays may be traced in Mansfield's faithful which is full of lyrical imagination. Yeats furthered the cause of poetic drama with his heroic cycle of Cuchulain and Conchubar in On Baile's Strand. In Deirdre King Cochubar lures back Deirdre and her husband with a promise of forgiveness but treacherously murders him. Lascelles Abercrombie wrote such poetic plays as "The End of the World" and phoenix which are unlike Yeat's plays, associated with common reality. It is however T.S. Eliot who really marks the climax of the resurgent poetic drama. His study of the martyrdom of St. Thomas a Becket at the instigation of "Henry II" is more than a historical play. The struggle between church and state reflects the conflict between the spiritual and the temporal that becomes part of human experience. It is really stunning production of "The Murder in the Cathedral". "The Family Reunion" is a study of complex psychologies. "The Confidential Clerk" presents the need for self-knowledge, for openness of understanding and for commitment of the will. Christopher Fry who wrote "The Boy with a Cart" and "Venus Observed" and Auden who wrote "The Dog beneath the Skin" are the other contemporary verse dramatists. Absurd Drama, a late 20th Century kind of play is a kind of

drama which holds that the human condition is essentially absurd and that this condition can be represented only in works that are themselves absurd. In such plays there is a complete divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting Becket Pinter and Albee are the most famous practitioners of this genre. In Beckett's "Waiting For Godot" the two characters wait for a person whose identity, purpose or day of arrival are totally unknown. In "Happy Days" there is a complete breakdown of communication between the husband and the wife both of whom are gradually buried in the sand.

15.2 TRENDS OF THE 20th CENTURY DRAMA

The 20th Century or Modern Period witnessed a great surge in dramatic writings. From Henrik Ibsen to Harold Pinter we have great writers who used classical elements of drama and even went on practicing the most innovative dramatic styles like absurd technique of drama writing playwrites like Robertson, Jones, Pinero, Shaw, Granville Barker, John Galsworthy, W B Yeats, T S Eliot, W H Auden, Bertolt Brecht, John Millington Synge, Samuel Beckett, Tom Stoppard, Caryl Churchil, Harold Pinter, Arnold Wesker, John Braine, Shelagh Delaney, Allen Sillitoe, and Keith Wterhouse. These dramatists brought a great change in both perspective and performance in the theatrical world of Twentieth Century. The followings are the trends of modern drama.

15.2.1 Realism

The plays written under realism aimed to capture the reality of the society in performance, design, style and even in narrative structure. Characters in such plays used naturalistic and genuine dialogues without artificiality of poetic style or verse. They tried to imitate exact human behaviour of day to day reality. These writers presented a stage full of men and women of their time beyond supernatural or fantastic phenomenon. Henrik Ibsen is often considered as the most important writer of realistic drama. He pioneered realism in his works like *A Doll's House*, *Hedda Gabber* and *Ghosts*. Other playwrites Like Anton Checkov has used realism in his play *Cherry Orchard*. George Bernard Shaw used realism in his plays like *Arms and the Man, Candida* and *Mrs. Warren's Profession.* It also includes Drama of Ideas and Problem plays. Drama of ideas originated after 1860, when a new way of writing was experimented in theatres. Drama of ideas incepts logical and intellectual analysis in the audience. It is a kind of discussion play that presents the reality of society and its problems. It awakens the audience from the usual torpor of emotional state. Emily Zola, Henrik Ibsen, T W Robertson, W S Gilbert, Henry Arthur Jones, A W Pinero, George Bernard Shaw, John Galsworthy, Granville Barker and Somerset Maugham are the great writers of Drama of Ideas. These plays also bear the name of social or realistic play as they put forward the logical apprehension of a social conflict. T W Robertson started the trend of realistic drama with his plays like *Society, Caste*, and so on.

15.2.2 Poetic plays

The 20th Century saw the revival of poetic drama in England, with several playwrites experimenting with the form and blending poetry with theatrical elements. The poetic drama was revived as a reactin to problem or realistic plays. The poetic plays deals with some ideal or belief of human life, they show it in symbolic manner. One of the key figures associated with this revival is T.S. Eliot. His play *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935) is often considered a landmark in the genre, exploring the inner thoughts and conflicts of Thomas Beckett, the protagonist of the play. Other writers of verse play are W B Yeats, Stephen Philips, John Masefield, John Drinkwater, and Lascell as Abercrombie. W B Yeats wrote remarkable poetic plays like *The Countess Cathleen* and *The Land of Heart's Desire.*

15.2.3 Expressionism

Expressionism was a movement in art which influenced drama, basically it was used in theatre in Germany. Expressionistic plays used such elements and sceneries with exaggeration and distortion to deliver strong feelings and the ideas so that audience can understand the psychological aspect of the problem and society. It practices failure of social institutions and give depth full analysis of governmental structure, family and gender roles. Such play exposed the hypocrisies of an ideal man and supports the man/hero who is not afraid of imposed laws. These plays used sound, scenery and light effect to implicate some great issues of society. German playwrights, George Kaiser wrote *From Morning to Midnight,* Ernst Toller wrote *Man and Masses* and American Playwright Eugene O' Neill wrote *The Hairy Ape,* and *The Emperor Jones.*

15.2.4 Epic Theatre

The term epic theatre was coined by Erwin Piscator to motivate modern playwrites to address the issues related to contemporary existence. Bertolt Brecht, a key figure in epic theatre, sought to engage audience's intellectully. He wrote *Mother Courage and Her Children* and used 'verfremdungseffect' (Alienation Effect). Epic theatre used a method of acting which Brecht named 'Gestus'. Brecht wrote "A Short Organum for the Theatre" which elaborated the concept of epic theatre very clearly.

15.2.5 Theatre of Cruelty

The Theatre of Cruelty was pioneered by Antonin Artaud. He wrote *The Manifesto of the Theatre of Cruelty* and tried to propound a new form of drama that can shock the audience after seeing the day today reality. In this way this theatre sought to shatter conventional dramatic norms, focussing on raw emotion and visceral experiences. Artaud aimed to ignite primal reactions from the audience, rejecting traditional storytelling in favour of a confrontational and intense theatrical experience. Through unconventional performance, exaggerated gestures, and symbolic imagery, the Theatre of Cruelty aimed to break down the barriers between performers and spectators, immersing the audience in a disorientation yet transformative encounter. The plays related to this theatre were *Jet of Blood, The Changeling, The Balcony and The Maids.*

15.2.6 Theatre of the Absurd

The term 'Theatre of Absurd' was coined by great critic Martin Esslin in his avante garde essay "The Theatre of the Absurd" in 1960. In France it was called 'Absurd or New Theatre' practiced by Jean Genet, Jean Tardieu and Boris Vian. It was influenced by existential philosophy believed in the notion that 'absurd is that which has no purpose, or goal or objective'. It has its root in phenomenal work of Albert Camus's essay "The Myth of Sisyphus" that describes human condition as meaningless and absurd. The practitioners of this theatre were Samuel Beckett, Arthur Adamov, Harold Pinter, Tom Stoppard, Edward Albee, Gunter Grass and Eugene Ionesco.

15.3 THE PROBLEM PLAY

The Problem Play is a play which presents before us a problem. It is a form of drama that emerged during the 19th Century as part of the wider movement of realism in the arts, especially following the innovations of Henrik Ibsen. It deals with contentious social issues through debates between the characters on stage, who typically represent conflicting points of view within a realistic social context. It originated in nineteenth- Century France but was effectively practiced and popularized by the Norwegian playwright Ibsen. It was introduced into England by Henry Arthur Jones and A. W. Pinero towards the end of the Nineteenth Century. G. B. Shaw and Galsworthy took the problem play to its height in the Twentieth Century. H. Granville-Barker was the last

notable practitioner of this dramatic type. These playwrights were influenced by Ibsen but in dramatic talent were not even a patch on him. Ifor Evans justly remarks: 'The descent from Ibsen to Henry Arthur Jones and Sir A. V. Pinero is a steep one." Jones's problem plays like Saints and Sinners and Mrs. Dane's Defence are, in Evans' words, "the work of a cobbler who has never mastered his tools." Pinero's most popular play is The Second Mrs. Tanqueray which deals with the marriage of "a woman with a past." A. C. Ward observes: "Pinero did something towards transporting to the English stage the husk of Ibsen; but the substance of Ibsen's message provoked in England an outburst of rage that only a Bernard Shaw could face with self-possession." The problem play is also called "the propaganda play," for the obvious reason that its intent is overtly didactic and propagandist. The writer of the problem play is not a pure aesthete, a dispassionate creator of beautiful artifacts for their own sake. He is not like Henry James's "God of Creation" who remains out of His creation indifferently "paring his finger nails."' Ibsen, Shaw, and Galsworthy have written such plays to direct public attention to social evils and wrong attitudes. And what is more, a Problem Play is not something merely diagnostic but also something therapeutic; in other words, it not only spells out the ills but also prescribes the remedy. Shaw scoffed at the slogan "art for art's sake." He said that for the sake of art he would not undertake the labour of writing even one sentence, not to speak of a whole play. George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) was an Irish playwright, critic, and political activist. His influence on Western theatre, culture and politics extended from the 1880s to his death and beyond. He wrote more than sixty plays. Shaw's problem plays amply show his consuming moral intensity. He has been well called by Ward "the Knight of the Burning Pencil, a crusader whose appointed lifework was the endeavour to restore colour, light and joy to England's once green and pleasant land." Shaw had learned to question the customary beliefs of society and the accepted bases of public institutions. He tries to analyse and subvert such time-honoured concepts as patriotism, the supposed romance of war and chivalry, the self-assumed wisdom and realism of John Bull as against the alleged volatility and sentimentality of the Irish, and so on. His campaign is for rebuilding social institutions and creating a new climate of ideas on the basis of rationality and unsentimental realism. Witness his own words: "Progress is not achieved by panic-stricken rushes back and forward between one folly and another, but by sifting all movements and adding what survives the sifting to the fabric of our morality. In his problem plays, Shaw does this kind of sifting to separate the husk from the grain. Almost in every such play his intention seems to be to stand popular beliefs upside down. Truth is generally ugly or inconvenient and therefore Shaw's wit and raillery have the function of making it acceptable. Shaw's first play—a problem play—was, in the words of A. C. Ward, "a dramatic essay in 'social realism' long before the term had been coined in Russia or elsewhere. Built around the theme of slum-landlordism, Widowers 'Houses represents the cruel oppression of the poor slum dwellers by big financier-landlords. "Mrs. Warren's Profession" is about the evil of prostitution. Because of its theme—which was at that time considered outrageous—it was banned by the censor of the plays and was denounced by the public. The play is about the economics of prostitution as a profession in a free society. Its other aspects are ironically made subsidiary. Mrs. Warren is far from being a romantic courtesan. She is an ordinary, successful harlot. "The Apple Cart" is yet another thought-provoking comedy. Shaw defends the institution of monarchy which is represented in the play by King Magnus whose sagacious tactics upset the "Apple Cart" of democratic leaders. But the real villain in the play is neither monarchy nor democracy but capitalism (humorously represented by Breakages and Company) which obstructs all social and economic progress. "Arms and the Man" is a brilliant satire on the popular notions about love and war. Bluntschli, the Shavian spokesman in the play, is an unforgettable, no-nonsense mercenary who is fired not by any notions of chivalry and patriotism, but by a matter-of-fact love of money and good living. He is not a coward, only a down-to-earth realist who carries more chocolate than ammunition to the battle-

field. His function in the play is to cure the beautiful Raina of her romantic ideas and make her see Sergius, her dream soldier and fiancé, in his true colours as a pompous humbug and worthless philanderer. There is a group of Shaw's plays (such as Man and Superman, Heartbreak House, and Back to Methusaleh) which treat his favourite concept of "Life Force'" and being so are not strictly problem plays but plays of ideas. By "Life Force" he means, in Ward's words, "a power continually seeking to work in the hearts of men and endeavouring to impel them towards a better and fuller life." Shaw wavers between the mystic and the Christian in defining Life Force. He describes it alternatively as "the Holy Ghost denuded of personality" and "the will of God." Shaw's best play "Saint Joan" is not really a problem play though it addresses the problem of defining the real character and significance of "The Maid". John Galsworthy (1867-1933) was an English novelist and playwright, who won Nobel Prize for Literature in 1932. As a writer of the problem plays Galsworthy is hugely inferior to Shaw. He lacks his wit, humour, and intellectual sharpness. It is said that Shaw's plays are deficient in emotion. Galsworthy's are not, but emotion in his works is hardly different from cheap and mushy sentiment. His best-known play "Strife" represents the conflict between striking workers and factory-owners, neither of them ready to surrender to the other. Ultimately it is the death of the wife of the leader of the strikers which brings about reconciliation. "The Skin Game" dramatizes the struggle between old aristocrats and the newly rich industrialists. "Justice" and "The Silver Box" represent the evils of law, which treats some as more equal than others, as also the irrationality of consigning people to solitary imprisonment. Harley Granville-Barker (1877-1946) was the last notable practitioner of the problem play. His plays include "The Manying of Ann Leete", "Waste" (which was censored), "The Madras House", and "The Voysey Inheritance". The last named, to quote "Ward", "was his finest achievements, and one of the best and richest plays of modern times." Thus the problem play flourished in England in the period between the last years of the Nineteenth Century and lasted till the middle of the Twentieth.

15.4 WHAT IS THE THEATRE OF THE ABSURD?

The term "Theatre of the Absurd" is coined by the Hungarian-born British producer, dramatist, journalist, adaptor and translator, critic, academic scholar and professor of Martin Julius Esslin in his essay "Theatre of the Absurd." The term is widely used for the work of a number of playwrights, which were mostly written in the 1950s and 1960s, written mostly by the number of European playwrights in the late 1950s. The playwrights work merely exhibits the thought of human existence that has no meaning or purpose. If a problem and difficulty come, some logic is given on a matter, it simply makes the situation worse and awful, and further it leads to silence.

The "Theatre of the Absurd" exemplifies the philosophy of Albert Camus in the philosophical essay, 'The Myth of Sisyphus' that speaks of life with no innate and immanent meaning in it. For Camus, the world was beyond the understanding of man, so he asserts that it will always remain absurd and we should accept this fact. For Martin Esslin the four Terms/Concepts Background Topics Part II 31 playwrights i.e. Samuel Beckett, Eugene Ionesco, Arthur Adamov and Jean Genet were the chief and essential playwrights of the movement. After a passage of time, Harold Pinter was also incorporated to this group and some of the works of Tom Stoppard, Edward Albee and Jean Tardieu were also classified and categorized as belonging to Absurdist Theatre. Though, peculiarly, these writers were most of the time not comfortable with the label and hence, sometimes preferred to use terms such as "Anti-Theatre" or "New Theatre".

15.4.1 A Brief History of the Theatre of the Absurd

The movement, Theatre of the Absurd which was influenced by existentialism, began in the form of experimental theatre in Paris and resultantly, after the spread of the absurd form in other country, absurdist plays were written in French. It was after the rise of the Greek drama when the

Absurd elements first came into existence in the plays of Aristophanes in the form of wild humour and buffoonery of old comedy. Further, the morality plays of the Middle Ages can also be called a precursor of the "Theatre of the Absurd", which was dealing with common man's struggle and effort with allegorical and existential problems. It was during the Elizabethan period, when the dramatists like John Webster, Cyril Tourneur, Jakob Biederman and Calderon depicted and portrayed the world as mythological archetype.

15.4.2 Characteristics of the Theatre of the Absurd

There are some of the essential characteristics of the Theater of Absurd, but it is important to note here that, all these characteristics cannot necessarily and inevitably be found in all the absurdist plays as it is not necessary that the playwright must have used all the characteristics of Absurd plays. Some characteristics of the absurd theatre are as follows:

Questions of Existence

Absurd plays raise some basic and general questions of existence such as why we are alive, or why we have to die and why there is injustice, prejudice, suffering and pain.

Distrust and disbelief in Language

According to the absurdist playwrights, language is only a meaningless communication and stereotyped exchange of ideas because words fail to express essence of human existence.

Illogical Speeches and Meaningless Plots

The Absurdist playwrights by using illogical speeches and meaningless plots, wish to establish a feeling of freedom to make their own worlds.

Re-establishment of Man's Communion with Universe

The absurdist's endeavours to bring back the significance of myth and rituals in the life of man and make them aware of the ultimate realities of their life.

Accentuate on Abstract Values of Life

Absurdist's pressurize and force us to look at our abstract values of life like love and family. Hence, we may hope to accept the absurdity of life and try to find values in a world devoid and bereft of them.

Vagueness about Time, Place and Character

Absurdists have no time, place and character in their plays as they feel that there is no past or future, only the repetition of the present. Lack of communication among characters Each character lives an egoistic life and endeavours to get another character to understand him and as a consequence this results in more alienation.

15.4.3 Characters in the Theatre of the Absurd

The Characters in the Theatre of the Absurd, ambit from one dimension to multi-dimensions with no feeling but still with a very sensitive feeling. Mostly the characters are floating, buoyant, stereotype, archetype and flat because they have to deal with the absurd universe and time and again discard and renounce rational and logical devices. The characters speak in cliches and realism is their key principle, but often they are distorted and perverted at many points. It is very difficult for the Complex characters to go with this theatre because eventually they have to deal with the incomprehensive universe. As a result, the complex characters cannot go with the Absurd Theatre. The characters in Harold Pinter's plays are trapped in a confined space which is menaced by some

force, and that force is incomprehensible and unimaginable to them. For instance, in the play, 'The Room', the central character Rose, is menaced by Riley where the real source of menace remains a mystery.

15.4.4 Plot in the Theater of the Absurd

The 'Theater of Absurd' discards and rejects the traditional pattern of plot construction. It is comprised of repetition of clichés and routine as in the play *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett. Absence, emptiness, nothingness, and unresolved mysteries are the major characteristics of most Absurdist plots. For instance, in Samuel Becket's play *Waiting for Godot*, the action centers round the absence of a character Godot, who is long awaited but never arrives. The plot of the play also revolves round unexplained metamorphosis. For instance, in Eugene Ionesco's play, 'How to Get Rid of It', a couple is dealing with a corpse that is growing large steadily and firmly, but Ionesco never unveils and reveals the identity of the corpse and eventually, the corpse floats away unidentified in the unknown. The plots are generally and repeatedly cyclical too as occurs in Endgame, the play begins where it ends and the theme of routine and repetition keeps on moving.

15.5 MAJOR ABSURDIST PLAY WRITERS

Some of the best-known absurdist plays writers are:

15.5.1 Samuel Beckett (1906-1989)

Samuel Beckett stands as perhaps the most influential absurdist playwright, whose sparse, minimalist style and profound philosophical explorations earned him the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1969. Born in Ireland but working primarily in France, Beckett's work is characterized by a stripped-down aesthetic and an unflinching examination of human existence.

His masterpiece, "Waiting for Godot" (1953), revolutionized modern theatre with its portrayal of two tramps, Vladimir and Estragon, waiting endlessly for someone named Godot who never arrives. The play's famous line, "Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful," encapsulates the existential stasis at its core. The characters' circular conversations, repetitive structure, and the ultimate futility of their wait creates a powerful metaphor for the human condition.

"Endgame" (1957) continues Beckett's exploration of existential themes in an even more confined setting - a bare room where the blind, chair-bound Hamm controls his servant Clov and keeps his legless parents in trash bins. The play presents human relationships as simultaneously necessary and torturous, with characters trapped in patterns of dependency and cruelty.

Beckett's later works became increasingly minimalist. "Krapp's Last Tape" (1958) features a single character confronting his past through recorded tapes. "Happy Days" (1961) depicts a woman buried first to her waist, then to her neck in earth, yet maintaining relentless optimism. His ultimate minimalist piece, "Breath" (1969), consists only of a brief cry, followed by amplified breathing and a final cry - lasting just 35 seconds yet encapsulating the entirety of human existence.

15.5.2 Eugene Ionesco (1909-1994)

Romanian-French playwright Eugène Ionesco approached absurdism through satire and linguistic experimentation. His work often employs bizarre situations and disintegrating language to reveal the absurdity of social conventions and the inability of words to convey meaning.

Ionesco's breakthrough play, "The Bald Soprano" (1950), was inspired by the meaningless phrases in an English language textbook. The play portrays two couples engaged in increasingly

nonsensical conversation, with language deteriorating into disconnected sounds. As the characters lose linguistic coherence, their identities blur until they become indistinguishable from one another.

"Rhinoceros" (1959), perhaps Ionesco's most accessible work, uses the metaphor of people transforming into rhinoceroses to explore conformity and totalitarianism. The protagonist, Berenger, watches with increasing alarm as his friends, colleagues, and eventually his lover succumb to "rhinoceritis." By the play's end, he stands alone as the last human in a world of beasts, questioning his own sanity and resistance.

"The Chairs" (1952) depicts an elderly couple preparing chairs for invisible guests attending an important message that will be delivered by an orator. When the orator finally arrives, he can only produce unintelligible sounds, suggesting the ultimate impossibility of meaningful communication.

Ionesco's work is distinguished by its dark humour, theatrical inventiveness, and penetrating critique of language as a tool for understanding. His plays often begin with seemingly ordinary situations that spiral into nightmarish absurdity, highlighting the fragility of human reason and social order.

15.5.3 Jean Genet (1910-1986)

Jean Genet brought a unique perspective to absurdist theatre, infusing it with ritualistic elements, sexual transgression, and explorations of power dynamics. A former criminal whose literary talents were championed by Jean-Paul Sartre, Genet's work often examines the theatrical nature of identity and the relationship between oppressors and oppressed.

"The Maids" (1947) was inspired by a real-life case of two sisters who murdered their employer. The play features two maids who regularly enact a ceremony in which they take turns playing their mistress, with the ritual ultimately blurring the line between performance and reality. Through elaborate role-playing, Genet explores themes of class hatred, identity formation, and the destructive power of fantasy.

"The Balcony" (1957) is set in a brothel where clients act out elaborate fantasies of power—as judges, generals, and bishops. When revolution erupts outside, the line between illusion and reality blurs as these fantasy figures become actual authority figures. The play examines how power structures depend on theatrical performance and how revolution often merely replaces one set of performers with another.

"The Blacks" (1958) features Black actors performing a ritualistic murder for a white audience (portrayed by Black actors in white masks). This play-within-a-play structure allows Genet to explore racial prejudice, colonial power dynamics, and the performative nature of racial identity.

Genet's theatrical work is marked by ceremonial elements, metatheatrical awareness, and a transgressive aesthetic that challenges social norms. His characters often find freedom only through ritualistic performance, suggesting that identity itself is a form of theatrical construction.

15.5.4 Harold Pinter (1930-2008)

British playwright Harold Pinter developed a distinctive form of absurdism characterized by menace, ambiguity, and precisely crafted dialogue punctuated by his famous "Pinter pauses." While sometimes classified as a post-absurdist, Pinter shares the absurdist's concern with communication breakdown and existential uncertainty.

"The Birthday Party" (1957), Pinter's first full-length play, established his signature approach. The protagonist, Stanley, lives in a seaside boarding house until two mysterious men arrive and subject him to a bizarre interrogation that culminates in his mental breakdown. The play creates an atmosphere of menace through unexplained motivations and deliberate ambiguity.

"The Caretaker" (1960) examines power dynamics among three characters: two brothers and a homeless man they take in. Through shifting alliances and territorial disputes, Pinter explores human vulnerability and the need for connection. The play's sparse dialogue reveals both the characters' need to communicate and their inability to do so effectively.

"The Homecoming" (1964) portrays a family's disturbing response to a son's return with his wife. The play's exploration of family dynamics, sexual power, and territorial battles unfolds in Pinter's characteristically elliptical dialogue where what remains unsaid is as important as what is spoken.

Pinter's later work became increasingly political, but maintained his distinctive style of ambiguity and menace. His "memory plays" like "Old Times" (1971) and "No Man's Land" (1975) explore the unreliability of memory and the construction of personal narratives. In 2005, Pinter was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature for work that "uncovers the precipice under everyday prattle and forces entry into oppression's closed rooms."

15.5.5 Edward Albee (1928-2016)

American playwright Edward Albee brought absurdist sensibilities to American theatre, blending existential themes with psychological realism. While not always categorized as a pure absurdist, Albee's early works in particular demonstrate strong absurdist influences in their portrayal of communication breakdown, existential anxiety, and the absurdity of social conventions.

"The Zoo Story" (1958), Albee's first play, portrays a chance encounter between two men in Central Park that escalates to violence. Through the increasingly bizarre interaction, Albee explores isolation, connection, and the desperate human need to be acknowledged. The play's tension builds from seemingly innocent conversation to a shocking conclusion that questions the possibility of meaningful human contact.

"Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" (1962), Albee's most famous work, depicts a night of vicious psychological games between a middle-aged couple and their younger guests. While more naturalistic than other absurdist works, the play shares the movement's concern with illusion versus reality and the breakdown of language. As the characters' "fun and games" escalate, the distinction between truth and fantasy dissolves, revealing the empty core of their existence.

"The American Dream" (1961) and "The Sandbox" (1960) more explicitly adopt absurdist techniques to satirize American family values and the hollowness of conventional lifestyles. These plays feature cartoonish characters and stylized dialogue to expose the meaninglessness beneath social rituals and family relationships.

Albee's later work continued to explore human isolation and the difficulty of connection, though often in a more realistic style. Throughout his career, he maintained the absurdist belief in theatre as a means of confronting uncomfortable truths about human existence.

15.5.6 Fernando Arrabal (1932-)

Spanish-born playwright Fernando Arrabal developed a distinctive theatrical approach he termed "Panic Theatre," which combined elements of absurdism with surrealism and anarchic celebration. Working primarily in France, Arrabal's plays often feature extreme violence, sexual transgression, and childlike fantasy to challenge social and political oppression.

"Picnic on the Battlefield" (1959) presents the absurdity of war through the story of a soldier whose parents visit him in his trench for a picnic, bringing their bourgeois sensibilities to the battlefield. The juxtaposition of domestic banality with the violence of war creates a disturbing commentary on humanity's ability to normalize horror.

"The Automobile Graveyard" (1958) is set in a junkyard where abandoned cars serve as homes for social outcasts. The Christ-like protagonist is eventually crucified by authorities, combining religious imagery with absurdist techniques to critique authoritarianism and celebrate rebellious individualism.

"And They Put Handcuffs on the Flowers" (1969) draws on Arrabal's own experience as a political prisoner under Franco's regime. The play portrays prisoners who escape their grim reality through elaborate fantasies, suggesting that imagination provides the only true freedom in an oppressive world.

Arrabal's theatrical work is characterized by its provocative imagery, political engagement, and celebration of primal human instincts against societal constraints. His contributions to absurdist theatre include an emphasis on physical expression, ritualistic elements, and the transformative power of imagination.

15.5.7 Václav Havel (1936-2011)

Czech playwright, dissident, and eventual president Václav Havel developed a unique form of absurdism that directly engaged with the political realities of life under communist totalitarianism. His plays use absurdist techniques to expose the logical contradictions and linguistic manipulations of authoritarian systems.

"The Garden Party" (1963) follows a young man's rapid rise through a bureaucratic organization by mastering empty political jargon. As he adopts the system's language, he loses his identity and becomes indistinguishable from other functionaries. The play satirizes bureaucracy's ability to dehumanize through linguistic conformity.

"The Memorandum" (1965) centers on the introduction of an artificial language called "Ptydepe" designed for maximum precision but practically unusable. This absurdist premise allows Havel to explore how totalitarian systems use language to control thought and create arbitrary power structures.

"Largo Desolato" (1984), written after Havel's imprisonment for dissident activities, portrays a philosopher paralyzed by fear of arrest and expectations from both authorities and supporters. The play examines the psychological toll of living under constant surveillance and the challenges of maintaining intellectual integrity under political pressure.

Havel's absurdism is distinguished by its clear political purpose and ethical foundation. Unlike some absurdist's who suggest meaning is ultimately unattainable, Havel maintained that truth and moral responsibility remain possible and necessary even in an absurd world. His theatrical work and political activism were ultimately inseparable aspects of his commitment to human dignity and freedom.

15.6 EXPRESSIONISM

Expressionism emerged as a revolutionary artistic movement in the early 20th Century, primarily in Germany and Austria. While it found its initial footing in visual arts, it quickly spread to literature, theatre, music, and film. Unlike the preceding movements of Realism and Naturalism,

which aimed to objectively represent reality, Expressionism sought to convey subjective emotions and inner visions, often deliberately distorting reality to evoke emotional responses.

In literature, Expressionism flourished approximately between 1910 and 1925, though its influence extended beyond these dates. Expressionist writers rejected traditional aesthetic forms and conventions, preferring fragmented narratives, stream-of-consciousness techniques, symbolic imagery, and intense emotional expression. Their works often featured alienated individuals struggling against dehumanizing modern society, authoritarian systems, or spiritual emptiness.

15.6.1 Historical Context

The rise of Expressionism coincided with a period of profound social and political upheaval in Europe. The rapid industrialization, urbanization, and technological advances of the late 19th and early 20th Centuries created a sense of disorientation and alienation. The horrors of the World War I (1914-1918) further intensified feelings of disillusionment and existential crisis.

In this turbulent atmosphere, Expressionist writers rebelled against what they perceived as the superficiality and moral bankruptcy of bourgeois society. They sought to express authentic human experiences and emotions, often through grotesque imagery, exaggerated language, and apocalyptic visions that reflected their anxiety about modern civilization.

15.6.2 Characteristics of the Expressionist Literature

Expressionist literature is characterized by several distinctive features:

Subjectivity and Interiority: Focus on inner psychological states rather than external reality.

Distortion and Exaggeration: Deliberate manipulation of reality to convey emotional truth.

Fragmentation: Disjointed narrative structures that mirror modern chaos and alienation.

Intense Emotionality: Raw expression of feelings like despair, anxiety, ecstasy, and rebellion.

Anti-bourgeois sentiment: Criticism of middle-class values, materialism, and conformity.

Visionary or Apocalyptic Themes: Prophetic warnings about societal collapse or spiritual rebirth.

Abstract and Symbolic Language: Use of metaphor and symbolism to represent inner experiences.

15.7 MAJOR EXPRESSIONIST AUTHORS

15.7.1 Franz Kafka (1883-1924)

Although Kafka is often associated with multiple literary movements, many of his works embody Expressionist qualities through their nightmarish scenarios, alienated protagonists, and distorted reality.

Major Works:

"The Metamorphosis" (1915): Perhaps Kafka's most famous work, this novella tells the story of Gregor Samsa, who awakens one morning to find himself transformed into a giant insect. The work explores themes of alienation, existential anxiety, and the dehumanizing effects of modern society.

"The Trial" (1925, published posthumously): This novel follows Josef K., who is arrested and prosecuted by a remote authority without ever learning the nature of his crime. The bureaucratic nightmare portrayed in the novel captures the Expressionist concern with the individual crushed by incomprehensible systems.

"The Castle" (1926, published posthumously): The protagonist K. struggles unsuccessfully to gain access to the mysterious authorities who govern a village from a castle. The novel exemplifies Expressionist themes of alienation and the futile search for meaning.

15.7.2 Georg Kaiser (1878-1945)

Kaiser was one of the most prolific and significant Expressionist playwrights, known for his "Gas Trilogy" and other plays that critiqued industrial society and explored humanity's potential for renewal.

Major Works:

"From Morning to Midnight" (1912): This play follows a bank cashier who embezzles money and embarks on a desperate search for meaning in life. Through a series of increasingly disillusioning episodes, Kaiser portrays the emptiness of modern materialistic existence.

"The Coral" (1917): The first part of Kaiser's "Gas Trilogy," this play portrays a millionaire's son who attempts to transform his father's factory from a profit-driven enterprise into a utopian community.

"Gas I" (1918) and "Gas II" (1920): These plays complete Kaiser's trilogy, depicting the catastrophic consequences of industrialization and technological dependence.

15.7.3 Ernst Toller (1893-1939)

Toller was both a revolutionary political activist and a significant Expressionist playwright whose works often dealt with political themes and social critique.

Major Works:

"Transformation" (1919): This semi-autobiographical play depicts the protagonist's journey from nationalist to revolutionary pacifist, reflecting Toller's own experience during the World War I.

"Masse Mensch" (1921): This play explores the conflict between revolutionary idealism and pragmatic action through the character of a woman caught in a workers' uprising.

"The Machine Wreckers" (1922): Set during the Luddite rebellions in early the 19th-Century England, this play examines the human cost of industrialization and mechanization.

15.7.4 Gottfried Benn (1886-1956)

Benn began his career as a physician, and his early poetry often combined medical terminology with shocking imagery to express his disillusionment with civilization and his fascination with primitivism.

Major Works:

"Morgue and Other Poems" (1912): This collection established Benn as a major Expressionist poet. The poems, drawing on his experiences as a pathologist, feature graphic descriptions of corpses and decay to express his nihilistic worldview.

"Flesh" (1917): This collection continued Benn's exploration of physicality and mortality with its unflinching examination of human bodies and their vulnerabilities.

"Static Poems" (1948): While published after the heyday of Expressionism, this later collection shows the evolution of Benn's poetic style while maintaining some Expressionist characteristics.

15.7.5 August Stramm (1874-1915)

Stramm was an innovative poet and playwright who developed a highly concentrated, almost telegraphic style that broke conventional grammar and syntax to achieve immediate emotional impact.

Major Works:

"You" (1915): This poetry collection showcases Stramm's radical experimentation with language, using single words and fragments to convey intense emotions.

"Sancta Susanna" (1914): This controversial play about a nun's sexual awakening demonstrates Stramm's Expressionist technique in dramatic form.

"The Bride" (1915): Another experimental play that uses fragmented dialogue and symbolic characters to explore themes of love and sacrifice.

15.7.6 Alfred Döblin (1878-1957)

Though often associated with New Objectivity, Döblin's early works show strong Expressionist influences in their urban settings, stream-of-consciousness techniques, and critique of modern society.

Major Works:

"The Three Leaps of Wang Lun" (1915): This historical novel set in 18th- Century China combines Expressionist techniques with elements of Eastern philosophy.

"The Murder of a Buttercup" (1913): This collection of short stories demonstrates Döblin's experimental narrative style and psychological insight.

"Berlin Alexanderplatz" (1929): While published after the peak of Expressionism, this novel's portrayal of urban alienation and innovative narrative techniques show the lasting influence of Expressionist aesthetics.

15.7.7 Oskar Kokoschka (1886-1980)

Better known as a visual artist, Kokoschka also wrote several Expressionist plays that explored psychological states through dreamlike imagery and symbolic action.

Major Works:

"Murderer, Hope of Women" (1909): This brief, violent play about the battle between the sexes shocked audiences with its primitive intensity and fragmented dialogue.

"Sphinx and Strawman" (1911): This play uses puppet-like characters to explore themes of artistic creation and sexual desire.

15.8 THE KITCHEN SINK DRAMA

One of the most important movements in contemporary British theatre evolved between the 1950s and 1970s as a response to absurdist and avant-garde theatre, and it became well known during this time. The title "the kitchen sink drama" typically refers to plays that represent a new trend of British realism that purposefully captures a genuine portrayal of the working class throughout the years of wealth. The peculiar characteristic of kitchen sink drama was the context of conveying the social message, the breakthrough in society and on-stage. What they witnessed and experienced as social change and mobility, may in fact be perceived as the factual and reliable path our society is taking in the direction of the future. They sympathized with members of the working

class, especially the impoverished, and focused on the unpleasant aspects of modern existence through representations that place a strong emphasis on the connection between place and identity. The gritty everyday realities that contemporary Britons had to deal with at the time were represented. Writing or movies frequently dealt with issues such as homelessness, poverty, alcoholism, pregnancy and abortion, etc. Space for Learner When referring to kitchen sink realism, the phrase "angry young men" is often used. It pertains to British authors from the working and middle classes who wrote in the 1950s. Roger Cornish and Violet Ketels briefed the setting of kitchen sink drama in their book *Landmark of Modern British Drama-*

"A generation of playwrights was emboldened by Osborne's success to write about life in the rented bed-sitters of London and workers' cottages of grimy industrial towns across England. Gas stoves, sinks, creaking wooden chairs, and bare kitchen tables replaced the earlier fashionables decores with their overstuffed comforts, velvet draperies and stylish paintings."

15.9 MAJOR WRITERS OF THE KITCHEN SINK DRAMA

15.9.1 Arnold Wesker

Arnold Wesker (1932-2016) was a prominent British playwright known for his impact full contribution to post war British drama. Born in London, Wesker emerged as a leading figure in the Kitchen Sink realism movement, which sought to depict the lives of ordinary working class individuals with touch f reality and social relevance. He gained wide spread fame due to his trilogy of plays titled *Chicken Soup with Barley, Roots* and *I'm Talking about Jerusalem.* His trilogy, collectively known as the 'Wesker's Trilogy', explores the impact of political and social change on a Jewish working class family in London's east end. The plays are notable for their exploration of identity, ideology, and the struggle for social justice. Beyond the Trilogy, Wesker's body of work includes influential plays such as The Kitchen, set in the hectic environment of a restaurant kitchen. It was the first work of Arnold Wesker which later on filmed also and gained popularity. His other important plays are Chips with Everything, The Friends, the Merchant, When God Wanted a Son, and Breakfast. He wrote more than 50 plays and these plays explore the complexity of human relationship, societal challenges, exploitation and search for meaning in rapidly changing world. He was also a social figure who participated in several movements as he was also an advocate for the democratization of arts and the importance of making theatre accessible to a broader audience. His commitment to social realism and his ability to capture the nuances of everyday life make him a significant figure in the landscape of 20th Century Drama.

15.9.2 Shelagh Delaney

Shelagh Delaney (1938-2011) was a pioneering British dramatist, best known for her avante garde work *A Taste of Honey* which catapulted her to fame in the late 1950s. With Irish parental background she was born in Salford Lancashire, England. She made an indelible mark in the theatrical with her keen observation of working class life and her unflinching portrayal of unconventional characters. She wrote *A Taste of Honey,* at the young age of 19, and the play premiered in 1958. It was remarkable debut that challenged social norms and addressed issues of class, race, and gender. The play revolves around the complex relationship between an aged girl, Joe, and her unconventional, working class mother, Helen. The play raises the issues of sexual orientation and illegitimacy. Delaney's writing defied convention of time, offering a raw and authentic portrayal of characters rarely seen on the stage. In "A Taste of Honey" demonstrated a remarkable ability to blend humour with poignant social commentary. Her characters, particularly Jo, grapple with issues of identity, love, and societal expectations, providing a fresh and contemporary perspective on human condition. The play was a significant departure from the

prevailing theatrical landscape, which often focused on more traditional narratives. Delaney's legacy lies in her ability to give voice to the marginalised and challenge the status quo.

Delaney's second play is *The Lion in Love*, written in 1960. The play explores the complexity of love and raises the issue of sexism in society. Her other writings are

The White Bus, Dance with Stranger and a radio play, *Tell Me a Film.* Her contribution to drama, marked by the fearless exploration of social issues and a distinctive narrative style, continue to inspire and resonate with audiences, solidifying her place as a trailblazer in 20th Century British theatre.

15.9.3 John Osborne

John Osborne (1929-1994), a typical Kitchen Sink drama writer, wrote remarkable plays which left indelible mark on British Theatre. *Look Back in Anger, the Entertainer, Luther, Inadmissible Evidence* and *Epitaph for George Dillon* are some of the important plays. His seminal work *Look Back in Anger* is considered a catalyst for angry young man movement, which shares great and depthful thematic elements with kitchen sink realism. The play features a working class anti-hero, Jimmy Porter, who expresses discontent with upper middle class conventions and ideology. Jimmy is revengeful against the moral and hypocritical tone of ruling class as well.

Luther, another great play by John Osborne, explores the life of the influential 16th Century German theologian Martin Luther. The play goes deeper into Luther's internal and external conflicts as he challenges the Catholic Church, sparking the protestant reformation. There are other plays of John Osborne which again stand against the European conventions and psyche.

At the end, we may say that Kitchen Sink drama reflects the behaviour living condition of poor and working class people of postmodern time. Kitchen Sink Drama has very iconoclastic perspective which the writers of this genre demonstrated on the stage. They showed the tension and power struggle based on social, political and industrial conflicts of the contemporary British society. The writers displayed the conflict in naturalistic and realistic manner which laid the foundation of angry young man generation. Later on this genre influenced the variety of films, documentary and radio plays.

15.10 LET US SUM UP

Throughout this unit we have discussed about the 20th Century Drama, its historical background, chief characteristics and the major trends in the 20th Century Drama. Further we have discussed about the different genres of the modern drama viz. Problem Play, Theatre of the Absurd, Expressionism and The Kitchen Sink Drama. This drama is also known as Kitchen Sink realism, is a British cultural movement in literature, theatre and film that emerged in the late 1950s and early 1960s. It focuses on the realistic portrayal of the lives and struggles of ordinary working class people, often featuring "angry young man" disillusioned with society.

15.11 QUESTIONS

- Discuss the major trends of the 20th Century drama
- What is the Problem Play? Discuss its salient features
- What do you know about the term Expressionism?
- What is the Theatre of the Absurd?
- Write a note on the major writers of the Theatre of the Absurd

- Write a note on the Kitchen Sink Drama and its salient features

15.12 FURTHER READINGS

1. History of English Literature by Edward Albert.
2. A Short History of English Literature by Ifor Evans.
3. English Literature: Its History and Significance by William J. Long.
4. History of English Literature by Legouis and Cazamian.
5. Harold Pinter, *Complete Works*
6. R.S Furness, Expressionism.
7. A Short History of English Literature by Pramod K. Nayar
8. Richard Sheppard, Modernism—Dada—Postmodernism.

UNIT-16

POST-COLONIAL LITERATURE, FEMINISM, POST-MODERNISM AND POST-STRUCTURALISM

Structure

16.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand and define post-colonialism
- Comprehend how post-colonialism as a theory tries to bring out the angst felt by the colonies against the colonizers
- Understand and define feminism
- Comprehend how studying gender, forms an important part of our intellectual discourse and its deliverance;
- Understand and define post-modernism

16.1 INTRODUCTION

Post-Colonial Literature (also postcolonial literature and New English literature) is a body of literary criticism that responds to the intellectual discourse of European colonization of the Middle East, Asia and Africa. Post-colonial studies entail the critical destabilization of the intellectual and linguistic, social and economic theories support the western ways of thinking, of perceiving, understanding and knowing the world.

Post-modernism is a general and wide ranging term which is applied to many disciplines, including literature, art, economics, philosophy, architecture, fiction and literary criticism, sociology, ethics and morality, linguistic, history, politics, international relations, anthropology, visual arts and music. Post modernism gained significant popularity in the 1950 and dominated literature and art by the 1960s.

16.2 POST COLONIALISM

The term post colonialism is composed of two different elements. The major element is the word "colonialism" but there is also a very important prefix attached to the word which is "post". The prefix "post" adds an important dimension to our understanding. In the dictionary, generally, the meaning is "behind or after". If we attach it after a noun then 'post' indicates something that happens or comes after the event.

Postcolonial means "after colonialism". Generally, the term refers to the period after a former colony gains its independence. For instance, India became postcolonial in 1947, when it became a nation of its own and stopped being a colony of the British Empire. But "postcolonial" refers to more than just the formation of an independent government. Colonialism exists as ideologies and practices that assume supremacy of the colonizing culture and these do not end when the colonialists leave. Rather, "postcolonial" may refer best to the time period when a previously colonized culture grapples with the meaning of its identity as an independent entity. What language will a postcolonial society speak? Would that be of the colonizers, which had been the official language, or any indigenous languages? How will the history of the postcolonial nation be taught in their schools or in the schools of the colonizing country? Much postcolonial literary theory examines how authors deal with the issues and contradictions of life in formerly colonized cultures.

16.3 POSTCOLONIAL THEORY

Postcolonial theory takes many different shapes and interventions, but all share a fundamental claim and we cannot understand except in relationship to the history of imperialism

and colonial rule. This means that it is impossible to conceive of "European philosophy", "European literature", or "European history" as existing in the absence of Europe's colonial encounters and oppression around the world. It also suggests that colonized world stands at the forgotten center of global modernity. The prefix "post" of postcolonial theory has been sensibly debated, but it has never implied that colonialism has ended. Indeed, much of postcolonial theory is concerned with the lingering forms of colonial authority after the formal end of Empire. Postcolonial theory emerged in the US and the UK academies in the 1980s as part of a larger wave of new and politicized fields of humanistic inquiry, most notably feminism and critical race theory. As it is generally established, postcolonial theory emerges from and is deeply indebted to anti colonial thought from South Asia and Africa in the first half of the 20th Century, especially theory emerging from Latin and South America. Over the last four decades, it has remained simultaneously attached to the fact of colonial rule in the first half of the 20th Century and devoted to politics and justice in the contemporary scenario. It has taken multiple forms:

- It has been concerned with forms of political and aesthetic representation;
- It has been dedicated to accounting for globalization and global modernity;
- It has been invested in reimagining politics and ethics from underneath imperial power, an effort that remains steadfast to those who continue to suffer its effects; and
- It has been interested in continually discovering and theorizing new forms of human injustice, from environmentalism to human rights.

Postcolonial theory is centrally concerned with examining the mechanisms through which the colonizing powers persuaded the colonized people to accept a foreign culture as 'better' than their own original methods of government and social organization. Among the most important kinds of power/knowledge brought by the colonizers was the construction of the concept of 'race', and more specifically the racial binary opposition of 'white' and 'other' – be that other 'black', 'yellow',' brown', 'red', or whatever other colour became the signifier for the 'otherness' of the colonized people. In the case of the United States, the 'native' population was itself defined as white.

Postcolonial theory has influenced the way we read texts, the way we understand national and transnational histories, and the way we understand the political implications of our own knowledge as scholars. Therefore, postcolonial theory remains one of the key forms of critical humanistic interrogation in both academia and in the world.

16.4 MAJOR TERMS OF POST COLONIALISM

Some major terms to be noted under Post Colonialism:

16.4.1 Subaltern

A term taken from the colonial military context meaning a non-white soldier of inferior rank, which is used in postcolonial theory to denote a member of the colonized population. Gayatri Spivak uses the term specifically to refer to the lowest layers of a colonial or postcolonial society: the homeless, the day labourers, the unemployed, arguing that these subaltern populations are voiceless and invisible in both colonial and post- or neocolonial cultures. In her article, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988), Spivak focuses on women as subalterns in debates between British and Indian cultures around the issue of sati or widow-burning; women themselves do not participate, from either perspective, in the debate.

16.4.2 Hybridity

In the postmodern sense, a hybrid is any phenomenon that mixes elements from two distinct traditions or practices. Most post-structuralist theory, for instance, is a hybrid of various modes of thought or disciplines: psychoanalytic, Marxist, linguistic, anthropological, literary. Hybridity often causes deconstruction. Hybridity often comes up in postcolonial theory as a way to describe emerging forms of identity and status that arise in the postcolonial and postmodern world. Homi Bhabha discusses hybridity as the place between two conflicting cultures or moments, when identities are destabilized and deconstructed.

One is a hybrid if one belongs to more than one identity category, such as being Islamic (religious) and Turkish (national). Identity categories based on race, class, gender, and nationality, Bhabha argues, are continually being challenged and undermined by hybridity, by people who move across boundaries and inhabit the in between spaces of cultures. The counterattack to postmodern hybridity is the attempt to purify a race, culture, or ethnicity, often by genocide; 'ethnic cleansing' to eliminate people who do not fit within single identity categories is an attempt to eradicate hybridity.

16.4.3 Orientalism

As described by postcolonial theorist Edward Said, Orientalism can be defined as the process of making something or someone "oriental". Like Foucault, Said describes this as a discursive process—Western European explorers went to a place they called "the Orient" and wrote descriptions and understood "the Orient" as something other than their own country and civilization. "Orient" in English means 'East'. East and West are relative terms, not absolutes; they require a fixed position to have meaning. In the colonial era, this fixed position was Greenwich, England, the home port of the British Royal Navy. Said talks about how the West constructed the East through discourse, where the colonizer produces the writing and the colonized is silent. The colonized people do not produce knowledge, but are only the subject of knowledge produced by the colonizer. When the West writes the East, the writings create the "oriental" as fundamentally "other". The negative binary opposite of "civilization" are sexual exoticism, drug use, immorality, lack of organization, ignorance, poverty and is associated with the "oriental" in this construction. In Orientalism (1978), Said provides a critical analysis of the Western construction of 'oriental' culture in the guise of academic study. In Said's Culture and Imperialism (1993), he argues that the construction of African or Indian identity in the novelistic works of Jane Austen or Joseph Conrad, can be read as being concerned in the domination of colonial forms of power.

16.4.4 Post-Colonial Allegory

The simplest definition of allegory is a 'symbolic narrative' in which the major features of the movement of the narrative are all held to refer symbolically to some action or situation. This becomes particularly significant for postcolonial writers for the way in which it disrupts notions of orthodox history, classical realism and imperial representation. Paintings and statues have often been created as allegories of imperial power. Fredric Jameson made a controversial suggestion in the Third World Literature in the Era of Multi-national Capitalism (1986), that all the Third World literatures are 'necessarily' national allegories. Aijaz Ahmad strongly criticized the homogenizing nature of this statement (In Theory: Nations, Classes, Literatures). But Stephen Slemon suggests that we might rather see allegory as a function of the 'conditions of postcoloniality'. This is because allegory has always been a dominant mode of colonial representation and therefore becomes a particularly valuable form in which postcolonial literature may conduct forms of counter-discourse. This means, firstly, that postcolonial cultures may use allegory to 'read' the text of colonialism. many ways are used by postcolonial writers.

16.4.5 Alterity

Western perceptions of the relationship between consciousness and the world. Since Descartes, individual consciousness had been taken as the privileged starting point for consciousness, and "the other" appears in these post-Enlightenment philosophies as a reduced "other", as an epistemological question. That is, in a concept of the human in which everything stems from the notion that 'I think, therefore I am', the chief concern with the other is to be able to answer questions such as 'How can I know the other?', 'How can other minds be known?' The term 'alterity' shifts the focus of analysis away from these philosophic concerns with otherness, the other who is actually located in a political, cultural, linguistic or religious context. This is a key feature of changes in the concept of subjectivity, because, whether seen in the context of ideology, psychoanalysis or discourse, the 'construction' of the subject itself can be seen to be inseparable from the construction of its others. Literary theorists commonly see the most influential use of alterity in Mikhail Bakhtin's description of the way in which an author moves away from identification with a character (Todorov 1984). The novelist must understand his or her character from within, as it were, and also, he or she must perceive it as other, as apart from its creator in its distinct alterity. Importantly, dialogue is only possible with an 'other', so alterity, in Bakhtin's formulation, is not simply 'exclusion', but an individuality that stands as a precondition of dialogue, where dialogue implies a transference across and between differences of culture, gender, class and other social categories. This is related to his concept of 'exotopy' or 'outsideness', which is not simply alienness, but a precondition for the author's ability to understand and formulate a character, a prerequisite for dialogue itself. In post-colonial theory, the term has often been used interchangeably with otherness and difference. However, the distinction that initially held between otherness and alterity is peculiarly applicable to postcolonial discourse. According to Spivak, alterity is determined by a process of othering.

16.4.6 Ambivalence

A term first developed in psychoanalysis to describe a continual fluctuation between wanting one thing and wanting its opposite. It also refers to a simultaneous attraction toward and repulsion from an object, person or action. Homi K Bhabha is one of the important theorists of ambivalence. It describes the complex mix of attraction and repulsion that characterizes the relationship between colonizer and colonized. The relationship is ambivalent because the colonized subject is never simply and completely opposed to the colonizer. Ambivalence also characterizes the way in which colonial discourse relates to the colonized subject, for it may be both exploitative and nurturing, or represent itself as nurturing, at the same time.

Most significantly in Bhabha's theory, however, ambivalence disrupts the clear-cut authority of colonial domination because it disturbs the simple relationship between colonizer and colonized. The problem for colonial discourse is that it wants to produce compliant subjects who reproduce its assumptions, habits and values, that is, 'mimic' the colonizer. But instead it produces ambivalent subjects whose mimicry is never very far from mockery. Ambivalence describes this fluctuating relationship between mimicry and mockery, an ambivalence that is fundamentally unsettling to colonial dominance. In this respect, it is not necessarily disempowering for the colonial subject. The effect of this ambivalence is to produce a profound disturbance of the authority of colonial discourse.

Ambivalence, therefore, gives rise to a controversial proposition in Bhabha's theory as it implies that the colonial relationship is going to be interrupted, irrespective of any resistance or rebellion on the part of the colonized. In short, ambivalence is an ambiguous way in which

colonized and colonizer regard one another. Colonizers often regard colonizers as both privileged yet unethical.

16.4.7 Appropriation

A term used to describe the ways in which postcolonial societies take over those aspects of the imperial culture – language, forms of writing, film, theatre, even modes of thought and argument such as rationalism, logic and analysis – that may be of use to them in articulating their own social and cultural identities.

It is in broader and deeper level a two part process – abrogation and appropriation, a sort of hybridization or accommodation. It is used in juxtaposition with abrogation. An act of appropriation happens when the native writers, artists even politicians appropriate or use languages in the ways of expressing introduced by the colonizers in their works and in their political speeches but then infuse it with the local traditions and customs. Native writers creatively use English and can become a weapon of post colonialism. But, by and large, they are not trying absolutely replace the language of the colonizers. They are actually mastering it and using it. In other words, "to dismantle the master's house with his or her own tools". In literary tradition, these are the people wo use the Western languages, French, Italian, English, to tell stories or write stories. The stories would be of their native culture or may be the contact phase of their culture with the colonizers, but they would also show a certain degree of mastery of the language. It can be revolutionary as well.

Now, there is a debate, especially, in African postcolonial studies about whether or not appropriation is good or fit for the post colony. Chinua Achebe (quoting James Baldwin), noted that the language so used can 'bear the burden of another experience', and this has become one of the most famous declarations of the power of appropriation in postcolonial discourse. However, the very use of the colonial language has been opposed by writers such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o, who, after a successful career as a writer in English, has renounced the language of the former colonizer to write his novel and plays in Gikuyu. Nevertheless, Ngugi continues to appropriate the novel form itself, and it has been argued that the very success of his political tactic of renouncing English has relied on his reputation as a writer in that tongue.

Many other non-English speaking writers who have chosen to write in English do so not because their mother tongue is regarded by them as inadequate, but because the colonial language has become a useful means of expression, and one that reaches the widest possible audience. On the other hand, writers such as Ngugi argue that since access to English in the post-colonial societies themselves is often restricted to an educated elite, this wider audience is largely outside the country. The debate has been a persistent and unresolved one.

These arguments based on the political effect of choosing English as a medium of expression are frequently contested by the alternative claim that language itself somehow embodies a culture in a way that is inaccessible to speakers of another language.

Many writers feel encouraging translation between all the languages used in the various postcolonial literature and it is equally important to insist on the need for metropolitan institutions and cultural practices to open themselves up to indigenous texts by encouraging the learning and use of these languages by metropolitan scholars. On the whole, appropriation happens when the natives of the colonized cultures learn the language of their colonial masters and then start producing literature or art and that act can be revolutionary. In other words, to appropriate / re-define means 'to kill the master with master's tool'.

16.5 FEMINISM

The history of 'Feminism' may be divided into two ways the First waves dates from 1830 to 1920. This period may be described as the period of the 'Suffragette Movement'. The Second wave dates from 1960 to the Present Day. It organized around women's liberation. The Feminist Movement that began in the Nineteenth Century the Feminist demanded social and political heights on equality basis with man. Mary Wollstone craft's 'A Vindication for the Right of Women' laid the foundation of the Feminist Movement. Virginia Woolf's 'A Room of One's Own' and Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex' followed next. It examines how women have been represented in literature, the impact of societal structure on their lives, and the development of the female voices and perspectives in literary works.

It would be better to know first what feminism means as it is given below

1. Feminism is a collection of movement and ideologies aimed at defining, establishing and defending equal political, economic and social rights for women.
2. Feminist is an advocate or, supporter of the rights and equality of women. Feminist theory aims to understand the nature of gender inequality by examining women's social roles and lived experience, it has developed theories in a variety of disciplines in order to respond to issues such as the social construction of sex perspectives.
3. Feminist theory is the extension of feminism into theoretical or philosophical fields. It encompasses work in a variety of disciplines, including anthropology. sociology, economics, women's studies, literary criticism, art, history, psychoanalysis, and philosophy, Feminist theory.
4. Elizabeth Wright points out, "none of these French feminists align themselves with the feminist movement as it appeared in the Anglophone world".

16.6 POST MODERNISM: MEANING AND DEFINITION

The word 'post' is a prefix which means 'after' or "later", so the word Post Modernism refers to a philosophical movement that came after 'Modernism'. The movement started in the late decades of 20th Century. Post Modernism was a term for a philosophy that was applicable to all facets of society like economical, political, social, cultural, art, literature, music, fiction and history. Post modernism was a reaction to modernism.

Postmodern school of thought has nothing to do with the historical developments. In post modernism, the nature becomes secondary and prime importance is given to a more human world. It meant breaking barriers with everything that existed before in the human civilization. Post modernism thus inspired and grew from post-structuralism and its ideas. Postmodern thought reappraised the entire system of western civilization.

If modernism is understood with the advent of capitalism, post modernism deals with what comes after capitalism. One of the very important facts of post modernism is that, the post modernists do not believe in fixed, identifiable definitions. They do not have strict boundaries of defining anything as everything is based on one's personal subjectivity and interpretation. More or less, it's like a belief system that is indefinite and confusing in nature. For post-modernist theorists, reality is always incomprehensible, truth is something that is socially constructed, and its ever dynamic in nature. Sometimes, the main problem in studying post modernism is distinguishing it from what we call as 'modernity' as, postmodern exponents still investigate the areas that were studied by the modernist like parody, ambiguity, self-consciousness and irony. So we can say that

post modernism is an extension of modernism in terms of investigation. The term postmodern was coined by an historian named Arnold Toynbee in the forties.

16.7 THE MAJOR THINKERS OF POST-MODERNISM

Martin Heidegger (1889 – 1976), Michel Foucault (1926- 1984), Jacques Derrida (1930-2004), Jean Francois Lyotard (1924-1998), Richard Rorty (1931-2007), Fredric Jameson (1934) were important thinkers/philosophers of the post modernism discourse.

16.8 PRINCIPAL FEATURES OF POST-MODERNISM

The important features of Post-Modernism are following:

- One of the very important features of Postmodernism is its disenchantment with Modernism. It developed in reaction to the Modernist perspective on social life.
- The philosophy of post modernism supports globalization. Like globalization, post modernism feels that any form of borders be it social, political, economic are hindrance in development of human society and its communication within it. Post Modernists believe in breaking down all sorts of walls that restrict humans in any way. They promote a free world.
- Post-Modernist feel that ethics is a subject matter of the individual and it is not something that is collective. Every individual has his or her set of moral rules which can be different from one another. Therefore morality is a private affair.
- Post-Modernism is considered a very liberal philosophical movement, where all religions are considered effective and important. It does not lay stress importance on any one religion and is quite liberal and secular in approach. No one religion is important. It believes in plurality of religions.
- Post-Modernism says no one way of life is correct. Everyone has equal rights to live the way one wants to, without any restriction. This movement also supports the cause of homosexuals and the feminists. For them, every person has different social, intellectual and biological preferences.
- Post-Modernists believe that there is no absolute truth, everything is relative and in accordance to how one wants to interpret the reality. For instance, there can be hundred interpretations of a single painting and still all hundred interpretations would be right and valid. It values human subjectivity and thus in Post Modernism everything relative and nothing is absolute. Truth is ever changing and has no one explanation. There are multiple truths and not one ultimate truth.
- Post-Modernism supports rationality and self-subjectivity. It considers individual's opinion supreme and believes that everything is ever changing. For Post Modernists traditional knowledge is of no use in a postmodern world. It should be completely discarded. For them age old traditions bounds, imposes constraints on humans decelerating their development.
- The Post-Modernists believe that every individual constructs his or her reality according to its culture, environment and experience. Nothing appears real to the post modernists, for them. There are billions and billions of subjective realities and there is no single objective reality. A Post Modern is not convinced with the objectivity of the science as promoted in the modernist era. Science studies facts and according to the post-modernist view, facts can be understood and interpreted in more than one way depending upon the nature and subjectivity of the scientist.

- Post-Modernism is against traditional historical approach. For them past is something that is blur and does not help in any understanding of the present. History is rendered as an undefined past which is more like a fiction. Thinker like Foucault challenged history and the norm where study of past is considered unavoidable and important but at the same time, he said that history should be written as part of some philosophy and not merely as historical account.
- Post-Modernist were supportive of the concept of ‘’free love’’. They considered Christian marriages to be root cause of evils in the society. They had Utopian view of sexual relations that knew no burden of society or tradition.
- Post-Modernists do not get stuck in the categories of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’, as they are against the notion of absolute truth in post modernism.
- Post-Modernism is largely a reaction to scientific or objective efforts to explain reality. Post-modernism tends to be defined either as the period after modernism or as a ‘condition’ whereby established values are rapidly eroded by new technological advances and a general apprehension of what the future will bring.
- Post-Modernism postulates that many, if not all apparent realities are only social constructs and are therefore subject to change. It claims that there is no absolute truth and that the way people perceive the word is subjective and emphasizes the role of language, power relations, and motivations in the formation of ideas and beliefs.
- Post-Modernism gained significant popularity in the 1950s and dominated literature and art by the 1960s. Post-modernism has influenced criticism architecture, many disciplines, including religion, literary sociology, ethics, and morality, history, politics, international anthropology, visual arts and music.

16.9 POST-STRUCTURALISM

Post-Structuralism represents a wide variety of philosophical perspectives and critical procedures that came to prominence in the 1970s, challenging some positions and radicalizing others of structuralism regarding language and other signifying systems. Roland Barthes (in his later phase of thought), Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan and Julia Kristeva are the prominent poststructuralist thinkers. There are also a number of other intellectuals in whom poststructuralist tendencies and themes are identifiable such as Lyotard, Baudrillard, Deleuze and Guattari. Though the terms “postmodern” and “post structural” are sometimes used interchangeably as synonyms, it is useful to follow those scholars who propose that “postmodern” refer to recent developments in literature and other arts, and reserve “post structural” to recent theories of criticism and of intellectual inquiries in general. Thus, it emphasises instability of language and the reader’s role in constructive meaning often through deconstruction and the analysis of power structure.

16.9.1 Origin and Development

Post structuralism evolved in the late 1960s as a critique of structuralist theory. The basis of post structuralist theories lies in the belief of the inadequacy of language. Jacques Derrida's theory of difference proposed that meaning is inherently unstable due to the play of signs within language. This is because that a signifier and a signified exist within language, which provides the meaning of the word or phrase. At its most basic level, the signifier may be the letters F-I-S-H, which provide the reader with the signified, the word FISH, which in turn provides a mental image of fish. However the reader's image of fish may vary from a live goldfish or shark to a freshly caught trout or rows of John Dory in a fishmonger's window. Thus, the interpretation that the reader lends to the

signifiers within the text is based upon the reader's experiences. These experiences may be derived from prior knowledge, which the reader has previously attained whether it is from a book, film, television or whatever. Thus, inter-textuality is viewed by the post-structuralist as essential to the interpretation of the text, and as such exists as strength rather than a weakness. Deconstruction, based on the work of Derrida aims to show that any and every text inevitably undermines its own claims to determine a definite meaning. Thus, the lack of meaning sabotages any attempts to form a definite conclusion within a text. This raises the concept of the lack of closure within the text. This in turn emphasized the role of the reader in the process of determining meaning in text, which led Roland Barthes to propose the four main points that comprise The Death of the Author (1968).

16.9.2 Themes of the Post-Structuralism

The poststructuralist philosophers come from diverse backgrounds and are occupied with apparently unconnected intellectual domains; for instance, Derrida was groomed in the phenomenological tradition of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, Jacques Lacan was a psychoanalyst in the Freudian tradition and Michel Foucault was a historian of social institutions and constructions. In spite of their different interests and preoccupations their thought shares certain common concerns which are typically poststructuralist. The Decentering of the Subject Structuralism had already implicitly shifted focus from the self or the subject. Marxism, existentialism, phenomenology and psychoanalysis were characterized by investiture of a central place to the human self. For these movements the human subject was a free and purposive agent who was the centre of operative initiative and control. Structuralisms instead focused in the supra-individual structures of language, ritual, and kinship which make the individual what he or she is. For the structuralists it is not the self that creates culture but culture that creates the self. The study of abstract relations within systems or "codes" of cultural signs is the key to the understanding of the human existence. In this sense, it dislodged the subject from the centre and divested it of all operative initiative and originary nature. Poststructuralism radicalized this theme. They directed this theme against the scientific pretensions of structuralism itself. In the absence of any "centre" language has become for them an unregulatable play of purely relational elements. The subject, author or narrator of a text becomes itself a purely linguistic product. In the words of Paul de Man we reduce the subject to the status of "a mere grammatical pronoun." Thus, Barthes proclaimed the "death of the author" in an article he published in 1968, with the same title. And Michel Foucault in a 1969 article "What is an Author," announced the "disappearance of the author." By such pronouncements they did not mean to deny that a human individual is a necessary link in the chain of events that results in a parole or text. What they denied was the validity of the "function," or "role" hitherto assigned in Western thought to a uniquely individual and purposive author, who is conceived as the originator, purposive planner (by his or her intentions) the determiner of the form and meaning of a text. Author is in a sense the construct of the culture. He is a "site" traversed by the "cultural constructs" and the "discursive formations" engendered by the conceptual and power configurations in a given era. "Reading Reads Texts" With the author dead, the reader or interpreter becomes a focal figure in poststructuralist treatments of signifying systems. The reader, however, is stripped of the traditional attributes of purposiveness and initiative and is converted into an impersonal process of reading. What does this reading read? It is no longer a literary "work"; this term implies a purposive human maker of the product. It is, instead, the "text", which is nothing but a structure of signifiers regarded merely as a given for the reading process. A characteristic poststructuralist view about the text is that it does not have a fixed meaning. The death of the author frees the reader to enter the literary text in whatever way he or she chooses. The intensity of pleasure yielded by the text becomes proportionate to the reader's abandonment of limits on its signifying possibilities. Critique of Metaphysics of Presence Poststructuralism raises a rebellion against what it considers to be the prejudices of Western thinking. One such prejudice is the

preference for presence over absence. In fact the Western thinking is so much pervaded by this prejudice that Derrida calls it simply the metaphysics of presence. Thus we see Plato investing all being in ideas on the ground that they are immediately present to the mind; he also prefers speech over writing on the ground that in speech the meaning is immediately present to the speaker and that the auditor has the possibility of making it present. Descartes accepts the "cogito" as the first principle of all sure and certain knowledge because it is claimed to be immediately and luminously present to every individual. Again Edmund Hussserl, the father of phenomenological movement distinguishes linguistic signs from indicative signs on the basis of the claim that in linguistic signs their meanings are immediately present to us, while in the case of indicative signs like smoke indicating fire, there is a "distance" between the signifier and the signified. Poststructuralism trains its guns against such claims of immediate presence. Accorging to them no meaning or concept can be immediately present to the thinker. It is always mediated through a sign, a signifier. In other words, meanings are never "presentified" (made present) but always represented. Every attempt to make it completely present is a "deferring" or a postponement, since new signifiers keep coming into play every time we do it. Critique of Origins Inquiry into origins is an attempt to see behind or beyond phenomenon to their ultimate foundation. For modern philosophers of the self (e.g existentialists, psychoanalysits and phenomenologists) the attempt to discover the origin of the self is the road to authenticity. Post structuralism denies the possibility of recapturing the origins of phenomenon.

16.10 MAJOR THINKERS OF POST-STRUCTURALISM

16.10.1 Roland Barthes

He was originally a confirmed Structuralist, published his *"The Death of the Author"* in 1968, in which he argued that any literary text has multiple meanings, and that the author was not the prime source of the work's semantic content. In his 1967 work *"Elements of Semiology"*, he also advanced the concept of the metalanguage, a systematized way of talking about concepts like meaning and grammar beyond the constraints of traditional (first-order) language.

16.10.2 Michel Foucault

The major project that he executed was the study of the history of some important institutions and social constructions like madness, clinic, sexuality, knowledge etc. His philosophical positions are derived from these studies. One of his basic positions is that the ways in which we think of madness, sickness, sexuality, knowledge etc. though appear to us as objectively given facts, are in fact, social constructions. We may illustrate this point by examining his account of the evolution of the social perception of madness. The concept of madness is not an objective, non-historical given, but is merely a contingent social construct which has a genealogy. Foucault identifies three distinct stages in the development of the concept of madness. The first stage is seen in the Middle Ages. In this period madness was seen as an integrally human phenomenon. Madness was opposed to reason, but it was recognized as an alternative mode of human existence. Consequently, though abhorred and disdained, it was seen as a meaningful challenge to reason. It could engage in ironic dialogue with reason or claim to be a domain of human experience and insight not available to reason. Classical Age (17th and 18th Centuries) represents the second stage. In this period the perception of madness changed. It was seen as the negation of the characteristic human attribute of reason. It was nothing but unreason, a plunge into animality. It had no human significance. Accordingly there was a conceptual exclusion of the mad from human society. Corresponding to this conceptual exclusion they were also physically excluded from human society by confinement in institutions. The conceptual and physical exclusion also led to a moral condemnation. The moral fault was not of the ordinary kind. While ordinary moral fault is the

violation of one or more norms of human community, madness is a more radical moral fault, where one makes a radical choice of rejecting humanity and the human community in favour of a life of sheer animality. In the Modern Age the perception of madness changes again. In this period once again the mad are regarded as being within the human community, not as animals outside human community. They are within human community; however, they are now seen as moral offenders, violators of specific social norms, who should feel guilt at their condition and who need reform of their attitudes and behaviour. Correspondingly, in the modern age there are ways of treating the mad, not merely isolating them but by making them the objects of a moral therapy that subjects them to social norms. There is a move from the merely custodial confinement of the Classical Age to the modern therapeutic asylum. Though this institution was widely regarded as an advance in humanitarianism, Foucault sees it as merely a more subtle and thorough method of controlling the mad. It is a "gigantic moral imprisonment". It may seem natural to us that the doctors should rule the mad, because we see the latter as "mentally ill". But Foucault claims that in the asylum the rule is not really so much by medical as by moral authority. Doctors have authority not because they have knowledge to cure, but because they represent the moral demands of society. This is evident today in the psychiatric practices such as psychoanalysis. The practice is accompanied by the trappings of medical science, but the key to the therapy remains the personal moral authority of the therapist, who serves as an instrument of social values. In "The Order of Things" as well as in "Archeology of Knowledge", Foucault shows that each epoch has its own underlying 'episteme' (the langue) which constrains and conditions the explicit discourses (the parole) of that age. Thus, there is nothing absolute about the modern episteme, and its peculiar conceptions of truth, science, man etc.

16.10.3 Jacques Lacan

He was a psychoanalyst, whose rereading of Freud transformed the Oedipus from the family neurosis machine of a bourgeois society to a modelling of how organisms become human beings, giving up their Pre-Oedipal infinite desire to take their place in the complex chains of substitute objects for that earlier, omnivorous form of experience. Organisms shift in part from bodily currents of flowing energy to concepts or signs of themselves, particularly as they are mirrored in the discourse of others. Hence Lacan's "Father" isn't just daddy, it is the weight of this social law, this social semiotic, the social sign system of roles, ideas, vocations, status. And "Mother" isn't 150 just mommy, either, but the first and most decisive "carrier" for that earlier, omnivorous form of desire which is always in danger of arresting in a dyad (the two-only relation of "me" and "mommy"). Psychoanalysis, in part, means becoming an effective reader of the interested character of the primordial, the dyadic, and the social structuring of desire (and, of course, the egoistic, the personal relation, and the relation to society as a whole).

16.10.4 Jacques Derrida

Derrida first made his name as a Husserl scholar and critic. His translation of Husserl's "Origin of Geometry" with a long introductory essay, and Speech and Phenomenon which was a close study of Husserl's theory of signs propounded in his first Logical Investigation were applauded by the French University establishment. His name today is almost synonymous with "deconstruction;" he is its most prominent theoretician as well as practitioner. Derrida's structuralist roots are evident in his writings. Yet he radicalizes and goes beyond structuralism. His "radicalized structuralism" (poststructuralism) is set forth and elaborated in "Structure, Sign and Play in the "Discourse of the Human Sciences," a paper he read in 1966 at an International Colloquium at John Hopkins University, USA, and which was subsequently included in his Writing and Difference. In this paper Derrida showed that structuralism while proclaiming that everything is structural, did put certain things beyond structurality. He attacked the quasi scientific pretensions of

structuralism, derived from Saussure's concept of the structure of language and represented by Levi-Strauss. He asserted that the notions of system and structure, whether linguistic, cultural or social, pre-suppose the idea of a "centre" around which everything is structured and yet "escapes structurality." In Saussure's theory of language for example this centre is assigned the function of controlling the endless differential play of internal relationships, while remaining itself outside and immune from, that play. Derrida regards this incoherent and unrealizable notion of an ever-active yet always absent centre as only one of the many ways in which all Western thinking is logocentric or dependent on the notion of a self-certifying foundation, or absolute or essence or ground which is ever needed but never present. What gives unity to Derrida's work is his consistent attempt to question the fundamental pre-supposition that underlie Western philosophy and culture: the pre-supposition of logocentrism and foundationalism. So he does not consider his work properly philosophical; it is antiphilosophy. He writes, "But I am not sure that the 'site' of my work, reading philosophical texts and posing philosophical questions, is itself properly philosophical. Indeed I have attempted more and more systematically to find a non-site, or a non-philosophical site, from which to question philosophy."

16.11 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN STRUCTURALISM AND POST-STRUCTURALISM

Post-structuralism is a term for philosophical and literary forms of theory that both build upon and reject ideas established by structuralism, the intellectual project that preceded it. Though post structuralists all present different critiques of structuralism, common themes among them include the rejection of the self-sufficiency of structuralism, as well as an interrogation of the binary oppositions that constitute its structures. Accordingly, post-structuralism discards the idea of interpreting media (or the world) within pre-established, socially constructed structures.

Structuralism proposes that human culture can be understood by means of a structure that is modeled on language. As a result, there is concrete reality on the one hand, abstract ideas about reality on the other hand, and a "third order" that mediates between the two. A post-structuralist critique, then, might suggest that in order to build meaning out of such an interpretation, one must (falsely) assume that the definitions of these signs are both valid and fixed, and that the author employing structuralist theory is somehow above and apart from these structures they are describing so as to be able to wholly appreciate them. The rigidity and tendency to categorize intimations of universal truths found in structuralist thinking is a common target of post-structuralist thought, while also building upon structuralist conceptions of reality mediated by the interrelationship between signs.

Post-Structuralism is a late 20th Century movement in philosophy and literary criticism, which is difficult to summarize but which generally defines itself in its opposition to the popular Structuralism movement which preceded it in 1950s and 1960s France. It is closely related to Post-Modernism, although the two concepts are not synonymous.

In the Post-Structuralist approach to textual analysis, the reader replaces the author as the primary subject of inquiry and, without a central fixation on the author, Post-Structuralist examine other sources for meaning (e.g., readers, cultural norms, other literature, etc.), which are therefore never authoritative, and promise no consistency. A reader's culture and society, then, share at least an equal part in the interpretation of a piece to the cultural and social circumstances of the author.

16.12 LET'S SUM UP

We have discussed in this unit Post-Colonial Literature, its historical background, meaning and relevant terms related to it. This discussion further expands to the Feminism, cause of its emergence and major women writers of the Feminist Movement. We have discussed also the term Post-Modernism, its salient features and major thinkers along with their important works. In this unit have grasp also a firsthand knowledge about Post-Structuralism, its meaning, major themes and important writers with their notable works.

16.13 QUESTIONS

- What are the key concepts in Post-Colonial Theory?
- What is the Post-Colonial discourse? Discuss it.
- What are the main issues of Feminism?
- Write a note on Post-Modernism.
- Discuss in brief the principal features of the Post-Modernism.
- Discuss the major themes of Post-Structuralism.
- Write a note on the major figures of the Post –Structuralism.
- Define the term Post-Structuralism.

16.15 SUGGESTED READINGS

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