

**SPECIAL ENGLISH PAPER IV:  
LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE  
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(BACHELOR OF ARTS)**



**ACHARYA NAGARJUNA UNIVERSITY**  
**CENTRE FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION**  
**NAGARJUNA NAGAR,**  
**GUNTUR**  
**ANDHRA PRADESH**

**Lesson – 4.1****THE AGE OF CHAUCER****Structure:**

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**4.1.1. Introduction:**

Two great movements may be noted in the complex life of England during the fourteenth century. The first is the political movement. It shows the growth of the English national spirit following the victories of Edward and the Black Prince of the French soil, during the Hundred Years' War. The wave of patriotic enthusiasm was on the high. The French language lost its official prestige, and English became the speech not only of the common people but of courts and parliament as well. The second movement is social. It marks the growing discontent with the contrast between luxury and poverty, between the idle, wealthy classes and the overtaxed peasants.

Aside from these two movements, the age was one of unusual stir and progress. Chivalry, the mediaeval institution of mixed good and evil was on its spate. Trade, and its resultant wealth and luxury, were increasing enormously. The English began to conquer and colonize people. Above all, the first dawn of the Renaissance is heralded in England by the appearance of a national literature.

In the religious world there was a serious outburst of unorthodoxy. Wyclif and his followers were making an organized attack upon the Church. The doctrines were being preached in town and country alike, which was to appear in future as Protestantism.

### 4.1.2. Five Writers of the Age:

The literary movement of the age clearly reflects the stirring life of the times. There is the poet Langland, voicing the social discontent, preaching the equality of men and the dignity of labour. Wyclif, the greatest of English religious reformers is there giving the Gospel to the people in their own tongue. Gower, the scholar and poet, is there criticizing vigorous life and plainly afraid of its consequences. Mandeville, the traveller and prose writer, is there romancing about the wonders to be seen abroad. Above all there is Chaucer, scholar, traveller business man, courtier, sharing in all the stirring life of his times, and reflecting it in literature as no other but Shakespeare has ever done.

### 4.1.3. Geoffrey Chaucer (1340 –c.1400)

#### (a) Life of Chaucer:

For convenience sake Geoffrey Chaucer's life is divided into three periods. The first of thirty years includes his youth and early manhood. In this period he was influenced almost exclusively by French literary models. The second period, of fifteen years, covers Chaucer's active life as diplomat and man of affairs. In this period the Italian influence seems stronger than the French. The third, of fifteen years, generally known as the English period, is the time of Chaucer's richest development. In this period he lives at home and observes life closely but kindly. He seems to grow more independent of foreign models and is dominated chiefly by the vigorous life of his own English people.

Of the date of birth of Chaucer we have no direct knowledge. Probably he was born in Thames Street, London, where his father had a house in about 1340. Of his education we know nothing except that he was a great reader. His father was a wine merchant and had connections with the royal household. When Chaucer was seventeen, he was made page to the Princess Elizabeth. This was the beginning of his connection with the brilliant court, which in the next forty years, under three kings, he was to know intimately.

At nineteen in 1359 Chaucer went with the king on one of the many expeditions of the Hundred Years War to France. He was taken prisoner at a place called Retters, but was liberated on ransom by March 1360. Returning to England, he became after a few years squire of the royal household, the personal attendant and confidant of the king. It was during this period that he married a maid of honour to the queen. From many references in his early poems, it has been thought that this marriage into a noble family was not a happy one.

Chaucer joined the army in France again in 1369. In 1370 he was sent abroad on the first of those diplomatic missions that were to occupy the greater part of the next fifteen years. Two years later he made his first official visit to Italy to arrange a commercial treaty. From this time there is rapid development in his literary powers and the prominence of Italian literary influences. During the intervals between his different missions he filled various offices at home, chief of which was Comptroller of Customs at the port of London.

In 1386 Chaucer was elected Member of Parliament from Kent, and the distinctly English period of his life and work begins. Though busy in public affairs, his heart was with books. During that period politics was an uncertain business. Chaucer was a follower of John of Gaunt. His fortunes rose or fell with those of his leader. From this time until his death he was up and down on the political ladder. He died on 25 October 1400 and was buried in Westminster Abbey, in the chapel of St. Benedict, thus founding the Poet's Corner. The last period of his life, though outwardly most troubled, was the most fruitful of all.

### (b) Works of Chaucer:

The works of Chaucer are roughly divided into three classes, corresponding to the three periods of his life. It is difficult to fix exact dates for most of his works. Some of his pieces in The Canterbury Tales were written earlier than the English period, but were only grouped with the others.

**(i) First Period:** The best known, though not the best, poem of the first period is the Romanut of the Rose, a translation from the French Roman de la Rose, the most popular poem of the Middle Ages, a graceful course of love. Chaucer translated this universal favourite, putting in some original English touches. But of the present Romanut, only the first seventeen hundred lines are believed to be Chaucer's own work.

Perhaps the best poem of this period is the "Boke of the Duchesse," a poem of considerable dramatic and emotional power, written after the death of Blanche, wife of Chaucer's patron, John of Gaunt.

**(ii) Second Period:** The chief work of the second or Italian period is Troilus and Criseyde, a poem of eight thousand lines. The original story was a favourite of many authors during the Middle Ages. The immediate source of Chaucer's poem is Boccaccio's Il Filostrato, "the love-mitten one". Chaucer uses his material very freely, to reflect the ideals of his own age and society. He gives it a dramatic force and beauty which it had never known before.

The "Hous of Fame" is one of Chaucer's unfinished poems, having the rare combination of lofty thought and simple, homely language. In the poem the author is carried away in a dream by a great eagle from the temple of Venus to the Hall of Fame. To this house come all rumours of the earth. The house stands on a rock of ice on which were written great names of fame. Many of these have disappeared as the ice melted; but the older names are clear as when first written. For many of his ideas Chaucer is indebted to Dante and Virgil. But the unusual conception and the splendid workmanship are all his own.

The third great poem of the period is the Legende of Goode Wimmen. It is a glorious legend of good women. Nine legends were written of which 'Thisbe' is perhaps the best. It is probable that Chaucer intended to make this his masterpiece, devoting many years to stories of famous women who were true to love. But either because he was wearied of his theme, or because the plan of The Canterbury Tales was growing in his mind, he abandoned the task in the middle of his ninth legend.

**(iii) Third Period:** Chaucer's masterpiece, The Canterbury Tales, one of the most famous works in English literature, fills the third or English period of his life. The plan of the work is magnificent. It represents the wide sweep of English life. Though the great work was never finished, Chaucer succeeded in his purpose. He has given us a picture of contemporary English life, its work and play, its deeds and dreams, its fun and sympathy and hearty joy of living, such as no other single work of literature has ever done.

**(c) Plan of The Canterbury Tales:**

At the southern end of London Bridge, once stood Tabard Inn. It was the point of departure of all travel to the south of England Pilgrimage, the shrine of Thomas Becket in Canterbury. On a spring evening Chaucer arrives at the Tabard Inn, occupied by many pilgrims. It was the custom of pilgrims to wait at some friendly inn until a sufficient company were gathered to make the journey pleasant and safe from robbers who might be encountered on the way. Chaucer joins this company, which includes all classes of English society, to go with them on the next morning.

At supper the jovial host of the Tabard Inn suggests that each of the company shall tell four stories, two while going and two coming. The host will travel with them as master of ceremonies. Whoever tells the best story shall be given a fine supper when they all come back again.

There are thirty-two persons in the company. It is clear that Chaucer meditated an immense work of one hundred and twenty-eight tales, which should cover the whole life of England. Only twenty-four were written. They cover a wide range, including stories of love and chivalry, of saints and legends, travels, adventures, animal fables, allegory, satires, and the coarse humour of the common people. Of this work about 17,000 lines are in verse, while two stories – the tale of Melibeus and the Parson's Tale – in prose. The verse consists of rhymed couplets. He chooses the form of "heroic" verse with rhymed couplets and five accented syllables.

**(d) Prologue to The Canterbury Tales:**

In the famous "Prologue" Chaucer makes us acquainted with the various characters of the Tales. In the course of his life, Chaucer came into contact with them all. The Knight, the Squire, the Merchant, the Sailor, Scholar, Doctor, Monk, Labourer, Saint, and Knave – he knew them intimately and drew them from personal observation. He knew the court folk, the people, and he drew them for us with all their little tricks, mannerisms and external peculiarities. In a word, he became acquainted with the mediaeval Englishman as he moved and lived, and depicted him with a breadth of vision and a rich tolerant humour unsurpassed in English literature. There is a large-hearted charity in this treatment of the labouring class.

There is an open-air atmosphere about it all. His people are always on the move. They are never lifeless. They shout and swear, laugh and weep, interrupt the storyteller, pass compliments, and in general behave themselves as we might expect them to. There are tragedies as well as comedies in The Tales. Some of them are grave and subdued, while others are ablaze with colour and merriment. The thread of honest and kindly laughter runs through them all, serious and gay alike.

Chaucer is the first English writer to bring the atmosphere of romantic interest about men and women and the daily work of one's own world. He is neither a moralist, a social reformer nor a dreamer. Like Shakespeare, he makes it his business, in The Canterbury Tales, to paint life as he sees it, and leaves others to draw the moral. The Tales are the literature of everyman. It is the kind of work that belongs to the same world as the work of Shakespeare and Dickens. The best of The Canterbury Tales can be enjoyed by the people who enjoy The Pickwick Papers and The Tempest.

#### 4.1.4. William Langland (1332 – 1400):

Very little is known of Langland. He was born in 1331-2 somewhere near the Malvern Hills. He was educated in the school of the Benedictine monastery and probably took minor orders, but never rose in the church. He went to London with his wife and children, getting a living as a clerk in the Church. By 1362 he was writing his poem, The Vision of William Concerning Piers the Plowman. It is a long poem in alliterative verse divided into many books. There are several versions of the poem each differing considerably from others. The poem was so popular that it had fifty to sixty versions in existence. Strangely, it remained unprinted till 1550. Skeat, its major editor, distinguishes three principal versions or texts, the A text, B text and C text. The A text has twelve books with 2567 lines. Being angry over the evils of the age, he took up the poem again in 1377 and expanded the poem. This is the B text. It is in twenty books and contains 7242 lines. About 1393 or 1398 the author took up the poem again and redistributed the B text with some alterations. This makes the C text. It is in twenty-three books and contains 7357 lines.

The poem as we read it now is in two distinct parts, the first containing the vision of Piers, the second a series of visions. Its popularity shows that the common people cherished it so much. Its appeal to justice and common honesty and its clarion call to every man, whether king, priest, noble or labourer, to do his Christian duty impress every reader. Its two great principles, the equality of men before God and the dignity of honest labour, roused a whole nation of freemen. Its loyalty to the Church, while denouncing abuses that had crept into it in that period, was one of the great influences which led to the Reformation in England. It is one of the best works in English literature because of its national influence. It gives us the best picture of the social life of the fourteenth century. It was eagerly read in the latter half of the fourteenth century and remained popular throughout the fifteenth century. In the sixteenth century it was regarded as an inspiration by reformers. In modern times it is considered as a clear picture of contemporary life and an exposure of social and religious abuses.

The influence of Piers the Plowman lasted for several centuries. The name or the figure of the plowman appears in many poems and prose writings. He became a symbol and set the pattern of social and religious criticism in his own age.

After the success of his great work, Langland was possibly writing another poem called Richard the Redeless, a protest against Richard II. But, we are not certain of the authorship of this poem, which was left unfinished by the assassination of the king. After 1399 Langland disappears utterly, and the date of his death is unknown.

#### 4.1.5. John Wyclif (1320-84):

John Wyclif was a Yorkshireman, born near Richmond. He spent much of his life at Oxford, where he lectured on theology. The ideas born in a lecture room at Oxford were soon carried to distant places in England and in countries abroad.

Wyclif is the most powerful English figure of the fourteenth century. His preaching in native English touched the hearts and souls of the common people. His interests are with the common people rather than with the privileged classes. His theological views aroused much discussion and he became skilful in controversy. He had a firm belief that endowments were the root of all evil in the church and that it was the duty of civil power to enforce reformation by seizing church property.

Wyclif was anti-papal. For him the Pope was “Anti-Christ”, as the enemy of Christ’s teaching. He questioned the righteousness of every part of the religious system. The one feature of church life with which he had sympathy was the poverty and the popular preaching of the friars. This feeling led him to institute his “poor priests”, who began their preaching about 1377. Wyclif’s preachers at first were priests; but later many of them were laymen.

The scriptures were the rock upon which Wyclif built. There is a strong tradition that he translated the whole Bible into English. But the extent of his participation is not actually known. There are two Wyclif versions and were meant for the general public. Nicholas Hereford and John Purvey worked with Wyclif. The translation assisted the development of English prose as a means of expression. The translation came as the reply to his demand that the written source of the faith should be available for all in the language most familiar to them. His great translation earned him the title “father of English Prose”. His translation of the Bible was slowly copied all over England and so fixed a national standard of English prose.

The last few years of Wyclif’s life were marked by the controversy that followed his teaching against the fundamental basis of priesthood. He denounced the doctrine as a philosophical impossibility. A council at Blackfriars (1382) condemned Wyclif’s teaching. The work he produced in Latin and English towards the end of his life is enormous in bulk and uncompromising in spirit. The collected volumes of Wyclif’s English work contain many brief sermons. His influence was very wide - spread. Perhaps, he was the first writer in English to make an appeal to his countrymen of all ranks as one united body. He had always been moved by the warmest national feeling.

#### 4.1.6. John Gower (1325-1408):

Gower was a person of shrewd business instincts, with a large amount of landed property in East Anglia. His sympathies were aristocratic and conservative. The Peasants’ Revolt of 1381 horrified him, not merely as an upholder of law and order but as a landlord with vested interests. He transferred his support from Richard II to his rival, Henry of Lancaster.

Gower wrote in all the three languages of England – French, Latin and English. His first work was the French poem Speculum Meditantis. His next venture was in Latin Vox Clamantis.

Confession Amantis is his poem in English. In his own Latin note the poet tells us why he wrote each of these works. The French poem was designed to teach the way by which sinners could return to a knowledge of the Creator. The Latin poem was intended to point the moral of Richard II's misdoings. The English poem tells how Alexander was instructed by the discipline of Aristotle.

The French poem Speculum Meditantis comes first in order of time. For several centuries it disappeared and was supposed to have perished. Finally it was discovered in 1895. In the poem we get the familiar allegory of Sin, daughter of the Devil, giving birth to Death. The poet then discusses the moral history of mankind and declares that we must approach God and Christ through the help of Mary. The poem is a true literary work with a due connection of parts, and not a mere string of sermons. The most remarkable feature of the work is the mastery which the writer displays over the language and the verse.

In the Latin poem Vox Clamantis a great political event is made the text for his criticism of society. The Peasants' Rising of 1381 made a strong impression upon Gower, whose native country of Kent was deeply affected. The poem extends to about 10,000 lines. In general, the poem is a criticism of human society.

In his English poem Confession Amantis Gower admits frankly that he was not born to set the world right and proceeds to tell stories about Love. Hence, in the English poem we have more than a hundred stories told in a pleasing and simple style.

#### 4.1.7. John Mandeville:

About the year 1356 there appeared in England an extraordinary book called The Travels of Sir John Mandeville. It was written in the Midland dialect, which was then becoming the literary language of England. The book had been a household word in eleven languages. After nearly five centuries of its appearance researchers concluded that Sir John never lived and his travels never took place. Now it is fairly certain that this collection of travellers' tales is simply a compilation from various sources. The original work was probably in French, which was speedily translated into Latin, then into English and other languages. Wherever it appeared it became very popular. The author takes no account of time. In the prologue of the English version the author calls himself John Mandeville and gives an outline of his wide travels during thirty years. But, the prologue is more or less not original, and the real compiler is still to be discovered.

On its literary side the book is remarkable, though a translation, as being the first prose work in modern English. In a way, the book is an interesting commentary on the general culture of the fourteenth century. The 'plot' of the story is simple. A certain knight left England in 1322 to make Pilgrimage to Jerusalem. He travelled all over the world. On his return in 1343 he was taken ill. He was attended by a doctor who requested him to forget his suffering by writing an account of his travels.

The unknown translations of Mandeville made a great contribution to English literature. The prose moves steadily and smoothly. In a sense it was a new venture in English literature. The prose work was thinly disguised as a manual for pilgrims and was written as a book of pure amusement.



#### 4.1.8. Conclusion:

The period of Chaucer includes the greater part of the reign of Edward III and the long French wars associated with his name; the accession of his grandson Richard II (1377); and the revaluation of 1399, the deposition of Richard and the foundation of the Lancastrian dynasty. The Chaucerian age saw a great and significant advance in poetical forms of literature, and noteworthy ones in the domain of prose. With regard to poetry, we can observe the separation and development of various forms. The *Lyric*, chiefly the religious and love-lyric, continues to be written and developed. Chaucer himself contributes very little toward it, but a number of anonymous bards wrote lyrics. By the late fourteenth century, the *traditional Ballad*, of the type of the Robin Hood poems, had become an important source of popular entertainment. Mainly about love, local legends, the feats of local heroes, supernatural happenings, or religious stories, the ballad deals with man's elemental passions in frank and uninhibited terms. The use of the *allegory* in this age began to affect all the branches of poetry. Though crude, the allegorical method is a concrete and effective literary device for expounding moral and religious lessons. There were the *descriptive and narrative poems* of which The Canterbury Tales is an outstanding example. The field of prose is rapidly expanding in this age.

#### 4.1.9. Sample Questions:

1. What are the influences on Chaucer?
2. What is Chaucer's contribution to English literature?

#### 4.1.10. Suggested Reading

1. Harry Blamires. A Short History of English Literature.
2. Cambridge History of English Literature, Vol. 5.
3. The Teach Yourself History of English Literature: To The English Renaissance. Vol. 2.
4. Long. English Literature: Its History and Its Significance.

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**Dr. Y.S.R. Anjaneyulu**

**Lesson - 4.2****THE AGE OF SHAKESPEARE****Structure of the Lesson:**

- 4.2.1 Introduction**
- 4.2.2. Sir Philip Sydney**
- 4.2.3. Edmund Spenser**
- 4.2.4. Origins of the English Drama**
- 4.2.5. Moralities and Interludes**
- 4.2.6. Rise of National English Drama**
- 4.2.7. The Theatres**
- 4.2.8. Changes in The Drama**
  - Dramatic Forms: Comedy, History, Tragedy**
- 4.2.9. University Wits**
- 4.2.10. William Shakespeare**
- 4.2.11. Shakespeare's contemporaries and successors in the drama**
- 4.2.12. The Authorized version of The Bible**
- 4.2.13. Sir Francis Bacon**
- 4.2.14. Conclusion**
- 4.2.15. Sample Questions**
- 4.2.16. Books Suggested**

**4.2.1. Introduction:**

William Shakespeare is considered to be the greatest of the Elizabethan playwrights. The term "Elizabethan" is usually applied loosely to the drama produced during the reigns of Elizabeth and of her successors, James I and Charles I. The growth of drama had already begun at Elizabeth's coming to the throne. The English drama attained maturity during 1576, the date of building of the theatre, the first London playhouse, until 1642, when the Puritans closed the theatres.

The most characteristic feature of the Age was religious tolerance. The north of England was largely Catholic while the southern counties were strongly Protestant. The court, made up of both parties, witnessed rival attempts to gain the royal favour. Elizabeth favoured both religious parties and got full support from them. The defeat of the Spanish Armada established Reformation in England. It united all Englishmen in a magnificent national enthusiasm. It also sparked literary stimulus. It was an age of social contentment. Increasing trade brought enormous wealth to England. Parishes were made responsible for their own poor and the wealthy were taxed to support them. The increase of wealth and the improvement in living accounted for the new

literary activity. It was an age of dreams, of adventure and of unbounded enthusiasm. It was a time of intellectual liberty, of growing intelligence, of unbounded patriotism, and of peace at home and abroad.

#### 4.2.2. Sir Philip Sidney (1554-86):

Sidney was the chief of an elegant literary circle and exercised a great influence during his short life. He was the most commanding literary figure before the prime of Spenser and Shakespeare. His finest achievement was his connected sequence of 108 love sonnets, the Astrophel and Stella making Sidney the greatest Elizabethan sonneteer except Shakespeare. His pastoral romance Arcadia is an intricate love-story, embodying the ideals of medieval chivalry. The Apologie for Poetrie has taken its place among the great critical essays in English. It is an answer to Gosson's Schoole of Abuse, an abusive Puritan pamphlet. Sidney defends poetry as greater than history or philosophy, and as an art which instructs by pleasing.

#### 4.2.3. Edmund Spenser (1552-99):

Spenser was educated at Cambridge and entered the London scene in 1579 as a member of the famous literary circle surrounding Sir Philip Sidney and his uncle the Earl of Leicester. Sidney patronized Spenser, introducing him to the Queen and encouraging him in his imitation of the classical metres. Spenser stayed in Ireland eighteen years, serving the English Government during a period of rebellion, outrage and misery.

His first poem is The Shepherds Calendar (1579) which was a series of twelve eclogues, one for each month of the year. The pieces were on classical pastoral lines showing great metrical dexterity. A volume of miscellaneous poems appeared in 1591; in 1595 he published his Amoretti, eighty-eight Petrarchan sonnets celebrating the progress of his love; Epithalamion, a magnificent ode, rapturously jubilant, written in honour of his marriage; and Colin Clout's Come Home Again, a pastoral. In 1596 appeared his Four Hymns and Prothalamion, the latter not so fine as the great ode of the previous year. The shorter poems are known for their lyrical strain.

In spite of the variety and beauty of his shorter poems, The Faerie Queene is by far the most important of Spenser's works, over which he spent twenty years of his life and which he did not live to finish. The work appeared in installments from 1591 and was the pride of his countrymen, who confidently opposed it to all other epics, ancient or modern. Of the twelve books planned, only six and part of the seventh were completed. The allegory in the work is the most complex in the language, which is both baffling and delightful. For beauty and melody, for graphic pictures, and for depth and magical colour of atmosphere, the poem stands supreme in English. Milton, Keats and Tennyson were some of the numerous imitators of Spenser's style. The work is known for the introduction of the Spenserian stanza, which ever since has been one of the most important measures in the language.

#### 4.2.4. Origins of the English Drama:

English drama has its origins in religion and church. As early as the tenth century, the church had called in the aid of rudimentary dramatic performances to educate the masses about such events as the birth and resurrection of Christ. Priests introduced this dramatic appeal "in order to fortify the unlearned in their faith". It was to be a sort of living picture book for the masses. Religious plays as a means of instruction and amusement flourished with the development

of town life. Religious drama achieved greatest heights of poetical beauty. The authors tried to touch the hearts of uneducated masses. It was quite common that the playwrights were not popular by their names. The writers were anonymous. Not a single miracle play was printed till later times. Naturally, the comic scenes show the most originality, for in these there is nothing borrowed from any theological authors. The earliest Miracles probably date from the close of the eleventh century. As the number of the spectators grew, churches and church yards could not accommodate them. So, the stage had to be moved to the public place or street. The action in these performances gradually developed. The actors were priests supported by lay folk. The Miracles continued to be played till the close of the sixteenth century.

#### 4.2.5. Moralities and Interludes:

The next stage in the development of the drama is the Morality play. In the Morality, all the characters are allegorical. They aim at moral and religious education of the audience. It dates from the fifteenth century. They presented universal moral and religious truth in an easy popular form, which was also artistic. Unlike the authors of the Miracles, the writers of the Moralities passed from anonymity to known authorship. The playwrights of Moralities were fortunate to see their manuscripts in print. The writers of Moralities were compelled to invent a plot. Scene painting received some attention. Characters in these plays were individualized on the basis of their virtues and vices. Comic relief was often provided in the Moralities by means of an Interlude.

Interludes date back to the fourteenth century. The meaning of 'interlude' is a little bit unclear. It may mean a piece "played between" scenes of a drama. The term was applied to pieces which employed secular characters for secular instruction or diversion. In the course of time Interlude detached itself from the Morality. Interludes were often acted by household servants. It became a custom among noble men of wealth having a band of well - trained actors dependent on him. The purpose of Interludes is to amuse. They are the forerunners of the artistic comedy which was soon to appear. They are brief comic dialogues without any action or development. There is no plot, but the characters are life - like and interesting.

The growth of the English drama about the middle of the sixteenth century was the result of a number of contributory factors. Renaissance and the wave of classical translations fired the imagination of the English playwrights and stimulated creative activity. The influence of the classical drama is first seen about the middle of the sixteenth century. Ralph Roister Doister (1533) is the first English comedy. It is the first English play to be divided into Acts and Scenes. It is a drama in five Acts. Characters have local colour. Its chief aim is to cause innocent laughter. It marks a stage in the development of the English drama.

In the realm of tragedy the classical influence had most fruitful results. In the beginning the influence of Seneca was predominant. Gorboduc (1562) is the first English tragedy. The main features of the Senecan tragedy appear in it.

#### 4.2.6. Rise of National English Drama:

Various factors accounted for the rise of the national English drama in the Elizabethan Age. People wanted entertainment and drama was the only source of entertainment for them. It appealed to a larger public than any other branch of literature. The times themselves were dramatic. Life abounded in dramatic elements and situations. National themes were dramatized

and national sentiments were expressed. For creative writers drama was remunerative. Drama was the best way for authors in need of money to fill their pockets. Elizabethan drama was the fusion of various elements, popular, courtly and academic. It had enough action, thrill and sensation, enough of clownage, supernaturalism, coarse and indecent jokes, music and spectacle. It has been said that the English theatre was a cross-section of English society.

A number of obstacles hampered the growth of drama upto the earlier part of the sixteenth century. There were no professional actors. Plays, often in classical style, were written by the teachers and acted by the students. There were no theatres. The performances were given in the streets and in the courtyards of inns.

#### 4.2.7. The Theatres:

The first English playhouse called "Theatre" was built in the fields to the north of London in 1576. Many more theatres were constructed in the next few years on the south of the Thames. They were wooden buildings usually nearly circular in form, with tiers of galleries surrounding the roofless pit. The stage was a platform projecting into the pit, and was without scenery, foot lights, or a front curtain. Curtains in the back concealed an inner room which was used for hiding persons or furniture. On the front stage the actors were very close to the audience, who surrounded them on three sides. The stage stood for any place, indoors or out.

There were no women actresses. Women's parts were always taken by well-trained boys. Boys played Juliet and Cleopatra as well as the fairies in Midsummer Night's Dream. A great deal of money was spent on costume, though there was no regard for historical accuracy. A manager would often pay more for a dress than for the manuscript of the play. The spectators in the pit paid a penny and stood throughout the performance. The galleries had benches and boxes for which higher prices were charged. Gallants sometimes had their stools on the stage itself. Performances were by daylight in the afternoon.

#### 4.2.8. Changes in the Drama:

Old forms of drama were giving way to comedy and tragedy. The drama was beginning to present stories of all sorts with individual men and women. At first efforts were made by scholars and court poets to imitate classical plays in both subject matter and form. Such attempts are the first English comedy, Ralph Roister Doister, and the first tragedy, Gorboduc. The dramatists found a vast wealth of stories which had never been dramatized. In England the audiences cared very little for form. They wanted stories and fresh play every day. As a result everything was tried upon the stage. It was through a free and daring experimentation that the drama developed.

**Dramatic Forms:** Long performances were possible after permanent theatres were built. The short play or interlude gave place to a drama which would take two or three hours to play, and was usually divided into five Acts. Shakespeare's plays, when they were first collected, were divided into three groups: comedies histories, and tragedies.

**(a) Comedy:** Comedy was a very general term applied to all dramas in which the comic element was prominent. Its simplest form was farce, a play of ridiculous incident, usually with a clown as chief fun-maker. Many of the moralities contained large mixtures of farce, and every company of actors had one skilled clown. These plays usually deal with a plot of tricks. A clever slave is

generally the chief manipulator and often he is tricked. Aged parents, young people in love, parasites and tricky servants are generally the characters in these comedies. Comedy often followed this general model, but it soon developed into two branches. One main division, realistic comedy, dealt with contemporary manners, with usual events, with common people and ridiculed current fashions. Romantic comedy dealt with past or foreign scenes. Unusual adventures, idealized persons and romantic love are some of the main themes around which romantic plays are woven. It suited better to Elizabethan taste. It had its origin in the spirit of the time. Pastoral scenes with shepherds, hunters, nymphs and trees give an appropriate setting for gods and goddesses and other mythological creatures. Several pairs of lovers make the plot complicated. But by the end of the play difficulties and complications are removed and each lover is united with his proper mate. Much of the wit is verbal consisting of puns and rapid exchange of repartee.

**(b) History:** Historical plays were of many kinds. Majority of them dealt with English reigns and were based on the chronicle histories. The defeat of the Spanish Armada gave rise to the growth of patriotism. Presentations of English history became popular on the stage. The dramatists found plenty of material in the many chronicles that had recently been printed. The chronicle contained many events. Sometimes the dramatist would require many plays to cover a single reign. The playwright paid no attention to plot and the three unities of time, place, and action. A chronicle history play usually represented many actions, extending over one or several countries. The time of action spread over a period of many years. The chronicle material might be turned into a tragedy but the more characteristic form was a mixture of the heroic and comic. The action centered round princes and clowns, battles and jokes that would make historic events clear for the audience.

**(c) Tragedy:** Tragedy originated in Greece. In the beginning English playwrights imitated classical models. They were influenced by the Latin tragedies of Seneca. His gruesome stories of bloodshed and horror and his rhetorical style were models for many who attempted tragedy. The first English tragedy Gorboduc was written by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton and was acted before Queen Elizabeth in 1562. It is remarkable not only as the first tragedy in English, but as the first play to be written in blank verse. The old miracles and moralities were democratic plays; Gorboduc is aristocratic. There is almost no action or agitation. It is noble, austere, remote and high-spoken. The playwrights disregarded the unities of time and place. They gave to English tragedy from the beginning liberty of action which was to be one of its greatest glories. The artistic finish of Gorboduc is marred by the authors' evident purpose to persuade Elizabeth to marry. It aims to show the danger to which England is exposed by the uncertainty of succession. The plan of the play follows the classical rule of Seneca.

Unlike the classical tragedy which followed the three unities, English tragedy strove to represent the whole sweep of life in a single play. The scene changed rapidly. The same actors appeared now at home, now at court and then on the battlefield. Vigorous action filled the stage before the eyes of the spectators. The child of one act appeared as the man of the next. The imagination of the spectator was called upon to bridge the gaps from place to place and from year to year. The dramatist had free scope to present all life in a single place and a single hour. Tragedy and comedy were presented side by side, as they are in life itself. Writers of tragedies appealed to popular audiences to disregard the classical authorities. English tragedy slowly moved away from the frozen dignity of Gorboduc towards the warm humanity of the best old miracle plays.

#### 4.2.9. The University Wits:

The glorification of Elizabethan drama is due to the University Wits, a professional set of literary men. The literary men from Oxford and Cambridge took the drama as their special province. They drew a sharp distinction between the civilized theatre of the court and the commonplace of the vulgar. They claimed themselves to be the writers for the court. Of this little constellation Marlowe is the central sun, and round him revolved as minor stars Lyly, Peele, Greene, Lodge and Nash.

**John Lyly** (1544-1606) was the leader of the University wits. He was a student of Oxford and Cambridge. His receptive mind was hospitable to the delicate graces of literature. In character his plays were mythological or pastoral. His comedies like Campaspe, Endymion and The Woman in the Moone are remarkable for their witty dialogue. His famous romance Euphues, The Anatomy of Wit contains much moralizing and attacks upon irreligion and immorality. Lyly's plays were written in prose intermingled with verse. He established prose as the right medium of expression for comedy. He contributed for the establishment of high comedy as a form of drama enjoyable by the people of breeding and cultivation. In true comedy the main substance is a social complication that may be serious or amusing. The language may be a little bit coarse. High comedy demands a nice sense of phrase. Lyly was essentially a court dramatist. He added to the drama the feminine qualities of delicacy, grace, charm and subtlety. He refined it. The mannered graces of his style came to be known as 'euphuism'.

**George Peele** (1558-97) was at Oxford for several years. Though his dramatic career was very short, his work shows great variety. Whether he wrote by chance upon any subject or whether he was deliberately experimenting remains a matter for speculation. Peele's best known play is The Old Wives' Tale (1595). The incidents of the tale enact themselves visibly, and prove to be a foretaste of Milton's Comus. It is the first English play to have literary criticism in its jests. He had a feeling for the musical value of words and refined blank verse. He contributed melodic charm to blank verse.

**Robert Greene** (1558-92) studied both at Oxford and Cambridge. He travelled widely and knew at first hand the Italian authors to whom his work is most indebted. He was forced to earn his own living by his pen. He wrote all sorts of books, moral tales, love stories, novels and dramas. Greene carried high comedy into the region of complicated plot and simple human feeling. Some of his plays have characteristics of romantic comedy – witty dialogue, charming lyrics, faithful and witty pages, heroines disguised as boys, woodland scenes, mythological persons, and happy reconciliations.

**Thomas Lodge** (1558-1625) was educated at Oxford. He began his playwriting as early as 1582. He probably collaborated with Shakespeare in Henry VI and with other dramatists. His only surviving play entirely his own is The Woundes of Civil War, a kind of chronicle-play. His pamphleteering was voluminous and his prose romances were famous.

**Thomas Nashe** (1567-1601) was a remarkable playwright besides being a pamphleteer and storywriter. He contributed some part to Marlowe's Dido, Queene of Carthage, but his only surviving play is Summer's Last Will and Testament (1592), a satirical masque.

**Thomas Kyd** (1558-94) is one of the most important of the University Wits. Much of the dramatist's work has been lost. The Spanish Tragedy is his most important work. Its horrific plot, involving murder, frenzy, and sudden death, gave the play a great and lasting popularity. The only other surviving play was Cornelia.

**Christopher Marlowe** (1564-1593) was a product of Cambridge. He absorbed the music and the legends of Latin poetry. He became notorious for his atheism. His literary life began with translations. Like Shakespeare he started on his way as a poet of classical love. He was the greatest of Shakespeare's predecessors. The glory of the Elizabethan drama dates from his Tamburlaine (1587). The restless temper of the age finds beautiful expression in the play. The play was popular because of its grand style and powerful action. Marlowe carried the young men away by the force of his style. But, the dramatic excesses of the play were disliked by some.

Doctor Faustus (1588), the second play, is one of the best of Marlowe's plays. The play shows Marlowe at the height of his poetic and dramatic magnificence. It seems Milton was influenced by this play in the composition of his Paradise Lost. Marlowe's third play is The Jew of Malta (1592), a study of the lust for wealth. The central character Barabbas is suggestive of Shylock in The Merchant of Venice. Marlowe's last play is Edward II (1593), a tragic study of a king's weakness and misery. In style and dramatic construction, it is the best of Marlowe's plays. It is the first historical play of the type which Shakespeare followed in Richard II.

Marlowe gave his age a true tragedy. He also gave it tragedy's true instrument, great verse. Gorboduc had taught blank verse how to speak on the stage. Tamburlaine taught it how to sing. He learned something of his music from Spenser. His famous passages are like great solos, superbly lyrical and appropriate. His dramatic blank verse unites the formal dignity of Gorboduc with the musical fluency of The Fairie Queene.

Each "university wit" added some essential element in the drama, which appeared later in the work of Shakespeare. These men were actors as well as dramatists. They knew the stage and the audience. In writing their plays, they remembered the actor's part and the audience's love for stories and brave spectacles. Their training began as actors. They revised old plays, and finally became independent writers. They often worked together, probably as Shakespeare worked with Marlowe. They had a common store material from which they derived their stories and characters. They often produced two or more plays on the same subject. Much of Shakespeare's work depends on the plays of his predecessors.

Elizabethan drama is not a one man creation. It has not sprung full grown from the pen of a single playwright. Several writers contributed for its richness and variety. It has got its fruition in the hands of Shakespeare and Shakespeare is indebted to all his predecessors for one aspect of the drama or the other.

#### 4.2.10. William Shakespeare (1564-1616):

Shakespeare is not only the greatest playwright of the Elizabethan period but of all ages. It is a wonder how poor and poorly educated Shakespeare could become a giant figure in English literature. Shakespeare wrote for the theatre and tossed his works carelessly when he abandoned the drama and retired to his native village. Many scholars and enthusiasts took it upon themselves



to collect and classify the magnificent writer's works. Shakespeare was a great genius and had an imaginative and creative mind. But he never troubled his audience with something new. He took an old play or an old poem or some history to be the sources for his works and made them glow with his sparkling genius.

Shakespeare loved and lived in a play-loving age. He studied the crowds and gave them what they wanted. He reflected their thoughts and feelings. Like his colleagues, Shakespeare was first an actor, later revised old plays and finally an independent writer. He worked with other playwrights and learned their secret.

Shakespeare's dramatic and poetic output can be classified into four different periods of work, corresponding with the growth and experience of his life. They are:

1. a period of early experimentation. It is marked by youthfulness, wonderful imagination, excellent language and frequent use of rhymed couplets with blank verse. This period dates from his arrival in London to 1595. Typical works of this period are his early plays Love's Labour's Lost and Richard III.
2. a period of rapid growth and development. This period extends from 1595 to 1600. Plays written in this period have better plots and are artistic. Shakespeare achieved a marked increase in his knowledge of human nature.
3. a period of gloom and depression (100-1607). This period marks the full maturity of Shakespeare's maturity as a master playwright. The reason for the poet's sadness is not clear. But it is attributed to some personal experience, coupled with the political misfortunes of his friends. Twelfth Night, which is Shakespeare's "farewell to mirth," and his great tragedies Hamlet, King Lear, Macbeth, Othello, and Julius Caesar belong to this period.
4. a period of restored serenity, calm after storm. The Winter's Tale and The Tempest are the best of Shakespeare's later plays. They indicate a second period of experimentation with the taste of a fickle public.

Shakespeare's dramas are usually divided into three classes, called histories, comedies and tragedies. Strictly speaking the drama is of two types, comedy and tragedy in which many subordinates are included. A comedy is a drama in which the characters are placed in more or less humorous situations. The movement is light and often mirthful. Comedy ends in general goodwill and happiness. A tragedy is a drama in which the main characters are involved in desperate circumstances. It is serious and dignified. The movement is always stately, but grows rapid as it approaches climax. The end is generally tragic, resulting in death or dire misfortune to the main characters. Historical drama presents some historical age or character. It may be either a comedy or a tragedy.

**Shakespeare's Poetry:** It is generally asserted that, if Shakespeare had written no plays, his poems alone would have given him a commanding place in the Elizabethan Age. His two long poems, "Venus and Adonis" and "The Rape of Lucrece" contain much poetic fancy. His 154 sonnets are the only direct expression of the poet's own feelings. His plays are the most impersonal in all literature, but his sonnets are not. They were published in 1609, though written much earlier.

Their plan and purpose are hard to discover. The first 127 sonnets are believed to have been addressed to a friend or patron. The last 27 sonnets are said to have been addressed to a woman and this group of sonnets are also called Dark Lady sonnets. But the identity of the friend and the woman is still a problem among literary critics. Whoever the persons addressed to in these sonnets might be, the poems are wonderful pieces and could be enjoyed even by a modern reader.

Shakespeare holds the highest place in the world's literature. Two poets only, Homer and Dante, have been named with him. Shakespeare's genius included all the world of nature and of men. In a word, he is the universal poet. To study nature in his works is like exploring a new and beautiful country. To study man in his works is like going into a great city and viewing the crowd of all sorts and conditions. Shakespeare lets us see the man as he is in his own soul, and shows us in each one some germ of goodness. In his world, good always overcomes evil in the long run. Love, faith, work, and duty are the four elements that make the world right.

Shakespeare's influence in literature is difficult to assess. Goethe says, "I do not remember that any book or person or event in my life ever made so great an impression upon me as the plays of Shakespeare." His influence on English language and thought is beyond calculation. It has been said that a person who habitually reads Shakespeare finds himself possessed of a style and vocabulary that are beyond criticism. His thought and expression have pervaded our life and literature and it is impossible to escape his influence.

#### 4.2.11. Shakespeare's Contemporaries and Successors in the Drama:

There was no other great playwright after Shakespeare to fill his gap. It was one of the reasons for the decline of drama. Earlier playwrights wrote to please their audiences. The drama grew in England because of the desire of people to see something of the stirring life of the times reflected on the stage. There were no papers and magazines in those days. People came to the theatres to be amused and informed. Shakespeare and his predecessors fulfilled their desire.

After Shakespeare, things changed fast. The audience itself had gradually changed. In place of plain people eager for a story and for information, many people went to the theatre because they had nothing else to do. They wanted amusement only and called for something more sensational. But the playwrights lacked Shakespeare's genius and moral insight into life. **Ben Jonson** was the only exception. **Beaumont** and **Fletcher**, forgetting the deep meaning of life, strove for effect by increasing sensationalism of their plays. **John Webster** revelled in tragedies of blood and thunder. **Massinger** and **Ford** produced evil and licentious scenes and made characters and situations immoral. The stage had become insecure, frivolous, and bad. Ben Jonson's Ode, "Come Leave the Loathed Stage," is an expression of the majority play-goers who are wearied of the stage. In 1642 the British Parliament voted to close the theatres as breeders of lies and immorality.

**Ben Jonson** (1573-1637) was a commanding literary figure among the Elizabethans. For twenty-five years he was the literary dictator of London. With his great learning, his ability, and his commanding position as Poet Laureate he set himself against his contemporaries and the romantic tendency of the age. He fought bravely to restore the classic form of the drama and to keep the stage from its downward course.

With the mission to restore classical standards in drama, Ben Jonson confined the time of action in his drama to a few hours or a single day. His dramas abound in classical learning. They are carefully and logically constructed. Comedy and tragedy are kept apart. His comedies are intensely realistic, presenting men and women of the time exactly as they were. We can understand from his plays how men talked and behaved during the Age of Elizabeth.

Jonson's first comedy, Every Man in His Humour, is a key to all his dramas. His best comedies are Volpone or the Fox, The Alchemist, and Epicaene or The Silent Woman. Jonson wrote two great tragedies, Sejanus and Catiline, upon severe classical lines. He wrote many masques to be played amid elaborate scenery by the gentlemen of the court.

**John Webster's** extraordinary powers of expression rank him with Shakespeare. His two best known plays are The White Devil and The Duchess of Malfi. In spite of its horrors, The Duchess of Malfi ranks Webster as one of the greatest masters of English tragedy.

#### 4.2.12. The Authorized Version of The Bible:

One of the greatest achievements during this period was the beauty and importance of the 'authorized' version of the Bible published in 1611 (begun in 1607). It was the work of fifty-four scholars appointed by James I. Since then no other work has been done to shake the Authorized Version's dominating position as the greatest of English translations. The English Bible has been a potent influence in our literature, for its poetic, lyrical style. From cover to cover it is almost unvaried: firm, clear, simple, dignified, and thoroughly English.

#### 4.2.13. Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626):

By the side of religious, there grew up a secular literature – philosophical and moral. Bacon writes of religion with respect, but his work is independent of theology and even of Christian morality. He is the first English philosopher in date, and one of the most eminent and characteristic. His intellect was strong and upright, based on reason in the contemplation of truth. He elaborated his doctrines in his Novum Organum (1620).

Bacon wrote both in Latin and English, and of the two he considered the Latin works to be the more important. His English works include his Essays (1597-1612-1625) in three editions. The fifty-eight essays are on familiar subjects, such as Learning, Studies, Vainglory; and in method they represent the meditations of a trained and learned mind. His other English works were The Advancement of Learning, The History of Henry VI, Apothegms, and The New Atlantis, left unfinished at his death, a philosophical romance modelled upon Thomas More's Utopia.

Bacon's style is crisp, detached, and epigrammatic. It is full of pithy aphorisms, so pregnant with thought and practical wisdom. Many of his sayings have passed into proverbs. The Essays are the first true English prose – classic.

#### 4.2.14. Conclusion:

The age of Shakespeare is generally regarded as the greatest in the history of English literature. The thought, feeling, and vigorous action of the age find their best expression in the drama. The plays of the age are still read even today for their variety and craftsmanship. Though

the poetical production was not quite equal to the dramatic, it was nevertheless of great and original beauty. In Elizabethan times the development of prose was slower and slighter than that of poetry.

#### 4.2.15. Sample Questions

1. What are the characteristic features of the Elizabethan Age?
2. Write a note on moralities and interludes.
3. Write a note on the University Wits.
4. What is the contribution of Shakespeare to the English Drama?

#### 4.2.16. Suggested Reading:

1. **George Sampson.** Revised by **R.C. Churchill.** The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature.
2. **Long.** English Literature: Its History and Its Significance.
3. **Felix E. Scheling.** The English Drama.
4. **Harry Blamires.** A Short History of English Literature (ELBS).
5. **Boris Ford.** Ed. The Pelican Guide to English Literature (Penguin).

**Dr. Y.S.R. Anjaneyulu**

**Lesson – 4.3****THE AGE OF MILTON****Structure of the Lesson:**

- 4.3.1. Introduction
- 4.3.2. The Puritan Movement
- 4.3.3. Literary characteristics
- 4.3.4. Transition Poets
  - (a) Samuel Daniel
  - (b) The Song Writers
- 4.3.5. The Spensarian Poets
- 4.3.6. The Metaphysical Poets
  - (a) John Donne
  - (b) George Herbert
- 4.3.7. The Cavalier Poets
  - (a) Thomas Carew
  - (b) Robert Herrick
  - (c) Suckling
  - (d) Lovelace
- 4.3.8. John Milton
  - (a) Milton's early poetry
  - (b) Milton's prose
  - (c) Milton's later poetry
- 4.3.9. Prose Writers of the Puritan Period
  - (a) John Bunyan
  - (b) Minor Prose Writers
- 4.3.10. Conclusion
- 4.3.11. Sample Questions
- 4.3.12. Suggested Reading

**4.3.1. Introduction:**

Next to Shakespeare, Milton occupies the highest place in English literature. Among the Puritan writers Milton's position is supreme. As the Elizabethan Age is synonymous with the Age of Shakespeare, the Puritan Age is equally known as the Age of Milton. This period is dominated by the Civil War: the earlier years are marked by hostilities; there was the execution of Charles I in 1649; the last portion covers the establishment of the Commonwealth, the rise and disappearance of Cromwell (1653-58), the confusion following upon his death, and the final restoration of the monarchy in 1660.

**4.3.2. The Puritan Movement:**

The Puritan movement may be regarded as a second and greater renaissance. It is the rebirth of the moral nature of man following the intellectual awakening of Europe in the fifteenth

and sixteenth centuries. The Puritan movement had two objects: the first was personal righteousness; the second was civil and religious liberty. In other words, it aimed to make men honest and to make them free.

Though the spirit of the movement was religious, the Puritans were not a religious sect. Most of them were not narrow-minded and dogmatic as were pictured. Cromwell and Thomas Hooker were Puritans. Yet, Cromwell stood like a rock for religious tolerance; and Thomas Hooker, in Connecticut, gave to the world the first written constitution. Puritanism included all shades of belief. The name was first given to those who advocated certain changes in the form of worship of the reformed English Church under Elizabeth. As the ideal of liberty rose in men's minds, then Puritanism became a great national movement. It included English churchmen and others all bound together in resistance to despotism in Church and State. They had a passion for liberty and righteousness such as the world has never seen. In the triumph of Puritanism under Cromwell severe laws were passed. Many simple pleasures were forbidden, and an austere standard of living was forced upon an unwilling people.

The political upheaval of the period is summed up in the terrible struggle between the king and the parliament. For centuries the English people had been loyal to their rulers. But, they had greater and deeper love for personal liberty. The crisis came when James I, who had received the right of royalty from an act of Parliament began, by the assumption of "divine right" to ignore the Parliament which had created him. The blasphemy of a man's divine right to rule his fellowmen ended in the reign of Charles I.

Religiously the age was of greater ferment. A great ideal, the ideal of a national church, was pounded to pieces. The Catholic Church has always held to the ideal of a united Church. But the possibility of a united Protestant Church perished with queen Elizabeth. Then the ideal of purely national Protestantism surfaced and strengthened. But the impossibility of uniting various Protestant sects was recognised after years of bitter struggle and heartache. The ideal of a national Church died hard.

### **4.3.3. Literary Characteristics:**

In literature also the Puritan Age was one of confusion, due to the breaking up of old ideals. Medieval themes of chivalry, the impossible loves and romances perished. In the absence of any fixed standard of literary criticism, there was the exaggeration of the metaphysical poets. Poetry took new and startling forms in Donne and Herbert. There grew spiritual gloom upon the writers of this age. It is unjustly attributed to Puritan influence. But it is due to the breaking up of accepted standards in government and religion. This gloomy age produced some poems of wonderful workmanship. John Milton's verse has glorified his age and people. The indomitable Puritan spirit finds its noblest expression in Milton.

There are three main characteristics in which Puritan literature differs from Elizabethan age. (i) Elizabethan literature, with all its diversity, had a marked unity in spirit, resulting from the patriotism of all classes and all their devotion to a queen who, with all her faults, sought first the nation's welfare. Under Stuarts all this was changed. The kings were the open enemies of the people. The country was divided by the struggle for political and religious liberty. The literature of the period was as divided in spirit as were the struggling parties. (ii) Elizabethan literature is generally inspiring. It throbs with youth, hope and vitality. The literature of the Puritan age speaks of sadness. Even its brightest hours are followed by gloom, and by the pessimism inseparable

from the passing of old standards. (iii) Elizabethan literature is intensely romantic. The romance springs from the heart of youth, and believes all things, even the impossible. In the literature of the Puritan period romantic spirit is lacking. Even in the lyrics and love poems a critical, intellectual spirit takes its place.

It is difficult to classify the literature of the first half of the seventeenth century and grouping poets by any standard. For example, Shakespeare and Bacon wrote largely in the reign of James I, but their work is Elizabethan in spirit. The name 'Metaphysical poets' is somewhat suggestive but not descriptive of the followers of John Donne. The name 'Spensarian poets' recalls the little band of dreamers who clung to Spenser's ideal. At the beginning of this bewildering confusion of ideals expressed in literature, we note a few writers who are generally known as 'Jacobean poets' or 'Transition poets'.

#### 4.3.4. Transition Poets:

**(a) Samuel Daniel (1562-1619):** Daniel is often classed with the first Metaphysical poets. He is interesting to us for two reasons, – for his use of the artificial sonnet, and for his literary desertion of Spenser as a model for poets. In his sonnets he aimed at grace of expression. He became influential in giving to English poetry a greater individuality and independence than it had ever known. In matter he set himself against the medieval tendency. This fling at Spenser and his followers marks the beginning of the modern and realistic school. Realism aims at seeing life as it is, without the invention of allegories and impossible characters. Daniel's poetry received more praise from Wordsworth, Southey, Lamb, and Coleridge.

**(b) The Song Writers:** The close of the reign of Elizabeth was marked by an outburst of English songs. The development of the rise of drama contributed to the burst of song writing. The rapid development of music as an art at the close of the sixteenth century was also another reason for the spats of songs in that period. Thomas Campion and Nicholas Breton were remarkable song writers of this period. Like all the lyric poets of the age, they are a curious mixture of the Elizabethan and the Puritan standards. They sing of sacred and profane love with the same zest.

#### 4.3.5. The Spensarian Poets:

Giles Fletcher and George Wither are the two great Spensarian poets. Fletcher (1588-1623) has at times a strong suggestion of Milton in the noble simplicity and majesty of his lines. George Wither (1588-1667) covers the whole period of English history from Elizabeth to the Restoration. The enormous volume of his work covers every phase of the literature of two great ages. His life was a varied one; now a Royalist and again a Puritan. Wither is a lyric poet of great originality. He is the epitome of the whole age in which he lived.

#### 4.3.6. The Metaphysical Poets:

The name, "Metaphysical Poets" is often used for all minor poets of the Puritan Age, excluding the followers of Daniel and Cavalier poets. It includes Donne, Herbert, Waller, Denham, Cowley, Vaughan, Marvell, and Crashaw. Their poetry is excellent and has influence on later literature. Thus Crashaw, the Catholic mystic, is interesting because his life is like Donne's, and his poetry is at times like Herbert's set on fire. Abraham Cowley was proclaimed the greatest poet in England. His Pindaric odes influenced English poetry throughout the eighteenth century. Vaughan was in some respects the forerunner of Wordsworth. Andrew Marvell's poetry shows the conflict between the two schools of Spenser and Donne. Edmund Waller stands between the Puritan Age and the Restoration. He was the first to use consistently the "closed" couplet. In

feeling and imagery, and style and expression Donne and Herbert tower all the metaphysical poets.

**(a) John Donne (1553-1631):** John Donne's poetry is uneven. At times it is startling and fantastic. It lacks consistent style and literary standard. Donne threw style and all literary standards to the wind. But his great intellect and his genius had marked him as one of those who should do things "worthy to be remembered." Donne played havoc with Elizabethan style. He influenced English literature in the way of boldness and originality. Ben Jonson declared that John Donne was "the first poet of the world in some things."

**(b) George Herbert (1593-1633):** Professor Palmer calls Herbert "the first in English poetry who spoke face to face with God." It is interesting to note that no poet of the first half of the seventeenth century, not even the gayest of the Cavaliers, has written some noble verse of prayer, which expresses the underlying Puritan spirit of his age. Herbert is the greatest and the most consistent of them all. His life was not all calm. The Puritan in him had struggled desperately before it subdued the pride and idleness of the Cavalier. Many of his poems are wonderful religious lyrics, even though some of them appear most artificial. His poetry certainly appealed to the men of his age. His poems will be read and appreciated so long as men are strong enough to understand the Puritan's spiritual convictions.

#### 4.3.7. The Cavalier Poets:

In the history of literature 'Cavalier' refers to a follower of Charles I in his struggles with the Parliament. The word has come to mean several things. A few of them include: haughty, casual, unceremonious, a horseman, especially a mounted soldier, a courtly gallant gentleman, a woman's escort or beau. The works of Cavalier poets are marked by grace, polish, arrogance and licentiousness. It shows Latin classical influences. The Cavalier lyricists wrote gay and light-hearted poems. They were soldiers and courtiers first and became lyricists incidentally. The Cavalier poets are a small group of poets: Herrick, Lovelace, Suckling and Carew.

**(a) Thomas Carew (1594-1639):** Carew may be called the inventor of Cavalier love poetry. His poetry is a peculiar combination of the sensual and the religious, which marked most of the minor poets of the seventeenth century. His poetry is the Spenserian pastoral stripped of its refinement of feeling and made direct, coarse, vigorous. His poems published in 1640, are generally, trivial or sensual.

**(b) Robert Herrick (1591-1674):** Herrick is the true Cavalier. Living in a country parish, he longed for the joys of London. With admirable good nature, Herrick made the best of his uncongenial surroundings. He watched with sympathy the country life about him and caught its spirit in many lyrics. His poems cover a wide range, from trivial life songs, pagan in spirit, to hymns of deep religious feeling. His best poems are remarkable for their exquisite sentiment and their graceful, melodious expression.

**(c) Sir John Suckling (1609-1642):** Suckling was one of the most brilliant wits of the court of Charles I. He wrote poetry as he exercised a horse or fought a duel, because it was considered a gentleman's accomplishment in those days. His poems, "struck from his wild life like sparks from his rapier," are trivial.

**(d) Richard Lovelace (1618-1658):** In his poetry Lovelace offers a remarkable parallel to Suckling. The two are often classed together as perfect representatives of the followers of King Charles.



#### 4.3.8. John Milton (1608-1674):

As Shakespeare is the representative of the Elizabethan Age, Milton is the representative of the Puritan Age. Shakespeare is the poet of impulse, of the loves, hates, fears, jealousies, and ambitions that swayed the men of his age. Milton is the poet of steadfast will and purpose. He moves like a god amid the fears and hopes and changing impulses of the world, regarding them as trivial and momentary things that can never take away a great soul from its course.

Milton added to the Renaissance culture and love of beauty the tremendous moral earnestness of the Puritan. He began with disciplining and strengthening of his soul. He said, "He that would hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem; that is, a composition and pattern of the best and most honourable things." Here is a new proposition: before one can write literature, which is the expression of the ideal, he must first develop himself as the ideal man. He studied hard and gave his days to music, art, and literature. He devoted nights to profound research and meditation. His style has been marked for wonder by every historian of literature. His style was unconsciously sublime because he lived and thought consciously in a sublime atmosphere.

**(a) Milton's Early Poetry:** In his early work Milton appears as the inheritor of all that was best in Elizabethan literature. "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" are twin poems which linger in the mind like strains of music, and which are known and loved wherever English is known. "L'Allegro" (the joyous or happy man) is like an excursion into the English fields at sunrise. The air is sweet; birds are singing; multitude of sights, sounds, fragrances, fill all the senses. To this appeal of nature the soul of man responds by being happy, seeing in every flower and hearing in every harmony some exquisite symbol of human life. "Il Penseroso" takes us over the same ground at twilight and at moonrise. The air is still fresh and fragrant. The symbolism is more tenderly beautiful than before. But, the gay mood is gone. A quiet thoughtfulness takes the place of the pure and joyous sensation of the morning.

The "Masque of Comus" is in many respects the most perfect of Milton's poems. It was written in 1634. Milton takes the simple theme of a person lost in the woods and calls in an Attendant Spirit to protect the wanderer. With its natural action and melodious songs the play becomes the most exquisite pastoral drama. England had borrowed the idea of the masque from Italy and had used it as the chief entertainment at all festivals. Milton, with his strong Puritan spirit, could not be content with the mere entertainment of an idle hour. "Comus" has the gorgeous scenic effects, but its moral purpose and its ideal teachings are unmistakable. "The Triumph of Virtue" would be a better name for this masque, for its theme is that virtue and innocence can walk through any peril without permanent harm. This eternal triumph of good over evil is proclaimed by the Attendant Spirit. "Comus" far surpasses its predecessors in beauty and melody of its verses.

In "Lycidas," a pastoral elegy and the last of his Horton poems, Milton is no longer the inheritor of the old age, but the prophet of a new. This poem is in memory of his friend, Edward King, who had drowned in the Irish Sea. Milton uses all the symbolism of his predecessors, but the Puritan is not content with heathen symbolism. So he introduces a new symbol of the Christian shepherd responsible for the souls of men. The Puritans and the Royalists at this time were drifting rapidly apart, and Milton uses his new symbolism to denounce the abuses that had crept into the Church. In this poem Milton has combined high moral purpose with the noblest poetry.

In the early period Milton wrote his famous "Sonnets". He contributed the point of perfection to this Italian literary form. In them he did not write about love, the usual subject with his predecessors. He wrote about patriotism, duty, music, and subjects of political interest.

**(b) Milton's Prose:** Milton expressed his ideas frankly and fearlessly on many contemporary issues in his prose. In his fiery zeal against injustice, Milton the poet is dominated by the soldier's spirit. He hated injustice and could not spare it. Areopagitica is the most popular work among Milton's prose writings. In Milton's time there was censorship on the publication of books. Milton protested against this, as against every other form of tyranny and his Areopagitica is the most famous plea in English for the freedom of press.

**(c) Milton's Later Works:**

The noblest of Milton's works Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained, and Samson Agonistes were written when he was blind and suffering. The first is the greatest and the only generally known epic in English. The last one is the most perfect specimen of a drama after the Greek method in English language.

**Paradise Lost:** Milton had considered several themes and many forms for a long time before he started Paradise Lost. Because of his Puritanic background, he abandoned the idea of a play and settled on the form of an epic poem. With its sublime imagery, its harmonious verse, its titanic background of heaven, hell, and the void that lies between, Paradise Lost is matchless in English literature. Paradise Lost is a great epic poem, not of a man or a hero, but of the whole race of men. The splendours of heaven, the horrors of hell, the serene beauty of Paradise, the sun and planets suspended between celestial light and gross darkness are pictured with an imagination that is almost superhuman. The poem is in blank verse. Milton plays with it, changing its melody and movement on every page as an organist out of a single theme develops an unending variety of harmony. In Paradise Lost Milton has unconsciously immortalized the Puritan spirit. For a modern reader the understanding of Paradise Lost presupposes two things — a knowledge of the first chapters of the scriptures, and of the general principles of Calvinistic theology.

**Paradise Regained:** Soon after the completion of Paradise Lost, in response to a friend's suggestion, Milton wrote the second part of the great epic poem, known as Paradise Regained. Paradise Lost tells us how mankind, in the person of Adam, fell at the first temptation by Satan and became an outcast from Paradise and from divine grace. Paradise Regained shows us how mankind, in the person of Christ, withstands the tempter and is established once more in the divine favour. Christ's temptation in the wilderness is the theme. Paradise Regained was Milton's favourite. It has many passages of noble thought and splendid imagery equal to the best of Paradise Lost. But Paradise Regained falls below the level of Paradise Lost, and is less interesting to read.

**Samson Agonistes:** In the play Samson Agonistes Milton turns to a more vital and personal theme. His genius transfigures the story of Samson, the mighty champion of Israel now blind, working as a slave among the Philistines. Milton's aim was to present in English a pure tragedy, with all the passion and restraint which marked the old Greek dramas. There are a few similarities between Samson and Milton in suffering alone. Like Samson, Milton had struggled against the enemies of his race. Samson had taken a wife from the Philistines and had paid the penalty. He was blind, alone, and scorned by his vain and thoughtless masters. Milton added the touch of intense yet restrained personal feeling to the essential action of the tragedy. Samson Agonistes is in many respects the most convincing of his works.

#### 4.3.9. Prose Writers of the Puritan Period:

Besides poetry, the Puritan age has also produced prose of high quality and of everlasting value.

##### (a) John Bunyan (1628-1688):

Bunyan is an extraordinary figure. There were two great influences at work in his life. The first one was his own vivid imagination, which saw visions, allegories, parables and revelations in every common event. The other was the spiritual ferment of the age. This religious ferment of the age made a tremendous impression on his sensitive imagination. With marriage to a good woman, reformation in Bunyan's life began. He married a girl as poor as himself. The only dowry which the girl brought to him was two old books, The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven, and The Practice of Piety. Bunyan read these books, which gave fire to his imagination.

There was a law prohibiting religious meetings without the authority of the established Church. Bunyan disobeyed the law and held public meetings, which frequently became fierce denunciations of the Church and government. Naturally, he was imprisoned for nearly twelve years. While in jail, he studied the King James Bible and Foxe's Book of Martyrs. The result of his study and meditation was The Pilgrim's Progress, which was probably written in prison, but was published much later. The publication of The Pilgrim's Progress in 1678 made Bunyan the most popular writer. He was already the most popular preacher in England. Books, tracts, sermons, nearly sixty works in all, came from his pen.

There are three great allegories in literature. Spenser's Fairie Queene appeals to poets, Dante's Divine Comedy to scholars, and Bunyan's The Pilgrim's Progress to people of every age and condition. It has been translated into many languages of the world and is popular throughout the world. Taine, a critic says: "Next to the Bible, the book most widely read in England is The Pilgrim's Progress ... Protestantism is the doctrine of salvation by grace, and no writer has equalled Bunyan in making this doctrine understood." It is not a procession of shadows, but a real story in English language. All classes of men have read it because they found in it a true personal experience told with strength, interest and humour.

**Other Works of Bunyan:** The Holy War, published in 1665, is the first important work of Bunyan. It is a prose Paradise Lost and has remarkable allegory in it. Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners, published in 1666, is the work from which we get the clearest insight into Bunyan's remarkable life. In 1682 appeared Bunyan's The Life and Death of Mr. Badman, a realistic character study which is a forerunner of the modern novel. Besides these Bunyan published many treatises and sermons in direct, simple, and convincing style.

##### (b) Minor Prose Writers:

The Puritan Period is generally regarded as one lacking literary interest. But there were many writers who wrote on everything. There were kaleidoscopic events that were waiting for plenty of writers to turn them into literary accounts. Three expressive books of this age of outward storm and inward calm are: Sir Thomas Browne's Religio Medici, James Taylor's Holy Living, and Izaak Walton's The Compleat Angler. The first was written by a busy physician; the second by the most learned of English churchmen; and the third by a simple merchant and fisherman. These three great books interpret human life alike and tell the same story of gentleness, charity, and noble living.

**Robert Burton** (1577-1640) is famous chiefly as the author of the Anatomy of Melancholy, which appeared in 1621. Burton was a clergyman of the Established Church and an incomprehensible genius. His Anatomy was begun as a medical treatise on morbidness. But it turned out to be an enormous book of quotations and references. It became very popular and was proclaimed one of the greatest books in literature.

**Sir Thomas Browne** (1605-1682) was a physician. He was known far and wide as a learned doctor and an honest man. His scientific studies had placed him in advance of his age. His religious views were liberal to the point of heresy. His Religio Medici met with most unusual success. It was one of the few books which saw in nature a profound revelation. It treated purely religious subjects in a reverent, kindly, tolerant way, without ecclesiastical bias. The charm, the gentleness and the remarkable prose style have established the book as one of the classics of English literature.

**Thomas Fuller** (1608-1661) was a clergyman and royalist. His lively style and witty observations naturally placed him with the gay Caroline poets. His best known books are The Holy War, The Holy State and Profane State, and Church History of Britain. Fuller travelled constantly for years, collecting information from many sources and gaining a minute knowledge of his country. This, with his overflowing humour and numerous anecdotes and illustrations made his work lively and interesting. We hardly find a dull page in any of his numerous books.

**Jeremy Taylor** (1613-1667) was the greatest of the clergymen of the Puritan period. Like Milton, he upheld a noble ideal in storm and calm. He has been called "The Shakespeare of divines" and "a kind of Spenser in a cassock." His writings, with their exuberant fancy and their noble diction, belong rather to the Elizabethan than to the Puritan age. From the large number of his works two stand out as representative of the man himself: The Liberty of Prophesying, which Hallam calls the first plea for tolerance in religion, and The Rules and Exercises of Holy Living. His another book The Holy Living and Dying was for many years read in almost every English cottage. It often constituted the libraries of Puritan homes.

**Richard Baxter** (1615-1691) was the "busiest man of his age". Like Bunyan, he was a non-conformist minister and was exposed to insult and persecution. Like Bunyan, he threw himself heart and soul into the conflicts of his age, and became by his public speech a mighty power among the common people. His style was plain and simple, and appealed directly to the judgment and feeling of his readers. Incredibly, in all, he left nearly one hundred and seventy different works. As he wrote chiefly to influence men on the immediate questions of the day, most of his work has fallen into oblivion. His two most famous books are The Saint's Everlasting Rest and A Call to the Unconverted.

**Izaak Walton** (1593-1683) was a small tradesman of London. He preferred books and good reading to the profits of business and the doubtful joys of city life. At fifty he left the city and followed his heart out into the country. He began his literary work by writing his famous Lives. Walton's The Complete Angler is probably more widely read than any other book on the subject of fishing. Among books on angling, it stands almost alone in possessing a charming style, and so it will probably be read as long as men go fishing. It leads to a better appreciation of nature.

#### 4.3.10. Conclusion:

No single political title fits the period of English literature from the death of Elizabeth to the Restoration as it covers the reign of James I and Charles I as well as the Commonwealth period. As its literature is dominated by the giant figure of Milton, it is convenient as well as appropriate to call it the age of Milton or the Puritan age. Milton attempted seriously to fuse into one the spirit of the Renaissance and of the Reformation. No other English poet has been at once so deeply religious and so great an artist. Milton's poetic achievement has generally been considered to be second only to that of Shakespeare. The period is also known for the contribution of the Metaphysical poets. Usually lyrical in nature, their work shows a surprising blend of passion and thought. Where most of the metaphysical poets were of a religious and mystical cast, the Cavalier poets dealt with themes of love. The development of prose continued from the previous age and its output was copious and excellent. This age is marked by the decline of drama. The actual dramatic work was small and unimportant; and the unequal struggle was terminated by the closing of the theatres in 1642.

#### 4.3.11. Sample Questions:

1. Write a note on the Puritan Movement.
2. What are the characteristic features of the Age of Milton?
3. Write an essay on the Metaphysical poets.
4. What is Cavalier Poetry? What are its characteristics?
5. Write an essay on Milton as a poet.

#### 4.3.12. Suggested Reading:

1. Cambridge History of English Literature Cavalier and Puritan Vol. 7 – Cambridge University Press.
2. Long. English Literature Its History and Its Significance.
3. The Teach Yourself History of English Literature To The English Renaissance, Vol.2.
4. Boris Ford (Ed.). The Pelican Guide to English Literature (Penguin).
5. George Sampson Revised by R.C. Churchill. The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature.

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**Dr. Y.S.R. Anjaneyulu**

**Lesson – 4.4****THE AGE OF DRYDEN, POPE AND JOHNSON****Structure of the Lesson:**

- 4.4.1. Introduction
- 4.4.2. Restoration Period (1660-1730)
- 4.4.3. John Dryden
- 4.4.4. Restoration Comedy
- 4.4.5. The Classic or Augustan Age
- 4.4.6. Alexander Pope
- 4.4.7. Jonathan Swift
- 4.4.8. Joseph Addison
- 4.4.9. Richard Steele
- 4.4.10. Daniel Defoe
- 4.4.11. The Transition Period of 18<sup>th</sup> Century
- 4.4.12. Dr. Samuel Johnson
- 4.4.13. Oliver Goldsmith
- 4.4.14. Richard Sheridan
- 4.4.15. The Novelists: (i) Richardson, (ii) Fielding, (iii) Smollett, (iv) Sterne
- 4.4.16. Prose writers
- 4.4.17. Conclusion
- 4.4.18. Sample Questions
- 4.4.19. Books Suggested

**4.4.1. Introduction:**

The return of Charles II as the King of England in 1660 is known as the re-establishment of monarchy. The period from 1660-1730 is also known as the period of the Restoration. The Puritan regime had been too severe. It had repressed too many natural pleasures. Now, released from restraint, society left the decencies of life and the reverence for law itself and plunged into excesses. The inevitable effect of excess is disease. For a generation following the Restoration in 1660, England lay sick of a fever. Socially, politically, morally, London of this period suggests an Italian city in the days of the Medici. The literature of this period, especially its drama, seems more like the delirium of illness than the expression of a healthy mind. The theatres were reopened, bull and bear baiting revived, sports, music and dancing replaced. The period from 1730-1798 roughly is known as the Augustan age with the end of the period specifically being considered as a transition period.

#### 4.4.2. Restoration Period (1660-1730):

In the literature of the Restoration we note a sudden breaking away from old standards. Many of the literary men had been driven out of England with Charles and his court or had gone into exile. On their return they renounced old ideals and demanded that English poetry and drama should follow the style to which they had become accustomed in Paris. Since Shakespeare and the Elizabethans were no longer interesting, literary men began to imitate the French writers. Here begins the so-called period of French influence, which shows itself in English literature for the next century. But many English writers copied the vices, not the virtues, of French comedy without any of its wit, delicacy or ideas. Jeremy Collier, in 1698, published a vigorous attack upon the evil plays and the playwrights of the day. All London, tired of the coarseness and excesses of the Restoration, joined the literary revolution, and the corrupt drama was driven from the stage.

The old Elizabethan spirit, with its patriotism, its creative vigour, its love of romance, and the Puritan spirit, with its moral earnestness and individualism, were both things of the past. At first there was nothing to take their places. Dryden, the greatest writer of the age said that in his prose and poetry he was “drawing the outlines” of a new art. The writers of the age developed two marked tendencies – the tendency to realism and the preciseness and elegance of expression.

In realism, the representation of men exactly as they are, the tendency was at first thoroughly bad. The early Restoration writers sought to paint realistic pictures of a corrupt court and society. They emphasized vices rather than virtues and wrote coarse, low plays without interest or moral significance. Later, this tendency to realism became more wholesome. It led to a keener study of the practical motives which govern human action.

The second tendency of the age was toward directness and simplicity of expression. In both the Elizabethan and the Puritan ages the general tendency of writers was towards extravagance of thought and language. The Restoration writers opposed this vigorously. From France they brought back the tendency to emphasize close reasoning and to use short, clear-cut sentences without an unnecessary word. The Royal Society had opted for a close, naked, natural way of speaking English prose. Dryden wrote this type of prose and adopted the heroic couplet for the greater part of his poetry. Waller and Dryden made the couplet the prevailing literary fashion. In their hands the couplet became “closed.” Each pair of lines contained a complete thought and stated that as precisely as possible. That is a kind of aphorism such as Pope made in large quantities in the following age. It contains a thought, is catchy, quotable and easy to remember. All the characteristics of Restoration literature are exemplified in the work of John Dryden.

#### 4.4.3. John Dryden (1631-1700)

Dryden is the greatest literary figure of the Restoration period. His work is an excellent reflection of both the good and the evil tendencies of the age in which he lived. In the realm of English poetry he stands between two different ages – the age of Shakespeare and Milton on one side and the age of Pope on the other – and serves as a transition from one to the other.

The numerous dramatic works of Dryden have fallen into obscurity. Now and then they contain a bit of excellent lyric poetry. His All for Love is another version of Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra, where he leaves his cherished heroic couplet for the blank verse of Marlowe and Shakespeare. It is considered to be his dramatic masterpiece.

Dryden's controversial and satirical poems are on a higher plane. His satire often strikes us as cutting and revengeful, rather than witty. His "Absalom and Achitophel" is the most powerful political satire. Taking the Bible story of David and Absalom, Dryden uses it to ridicule the Whig party and also to revenge himself upon his enemies. Mac Flecknoe is another stinging personal satire. A new political development is seen in Religio Laici and The Hind and the Panther, an allegory. The best expression of Dryden's literary genius is found in "Alexander's Feast," his most enduring ode.

As a prose writer Dryden had a very marked influence on English literature. He preferred short sentences and wrote in natural style without depending on literary ornamentation. When compared to other writers, Dryden cared less for style, but took more pains to state his thought clearly and concisely to be understood. The Classical school, which followed the Restoration, looked to Dryden as a leader to exactness of expression. With his prose, Dryden rapidly developed his critical ability and became the foremost critic of his age. His criticisms, instead of being published as independent works, were generally used as prefaces or introductions to his poetry. The Essay of Dramatick Poesie is his longest single prose work and a major piece of English literary criticism.

Dryden had great influence on the succeeding age of classicism. There are three elements in his influence. These are: (i) the establishment of the heroic couplet as the fashion for satiric, didactic, and descriptive poetry; (ii) his development of a direct, serviceable prose style; and (iii) his development of the art of literary criticism. The popular ridicule of Puritanism in burlesque is best exemplified in Samuel Butler's Hudibras. The realistic tendency, the study of facts and of men as they are, is shown in the philosophy of Hobbes and Locke. The age was one of transition from the exuberance and vigour of Renaissance literature to the formality and polish of the Augustan Age.

#### 4.4.4. Restoration Comedy:

There was a brilliant group of dramatists who made Restoration Comedy a thing apart in English literature. Restoration Comedy was different from the romantic comedy of the Elizabethans. It had broken with the verse tradition and showed its realistic tendency by the habitual use of prose. It drew its main inspiration from the native tradition which had flourished before the closing of the theatres in 1642. In particular it had its models in Beaumont and Fletcher and Ben Jonson. It was also strongly influenced by continental writers, especially by Moliere in France and by Calderon in Spain. Restoration Comedy was free from any element of tragedy; it acquired a liveliness, a grace and a zest of its own. It was satirical without being didactic, since it was rarely inspired with the desire to correct. Its sole aim was to amuse. Many writers took this path to popularity but Sir George Etherege (1634-91), William Wycherley (1640-1716) and later William Congreve (1670-1729) were the most representative.



**William Congreve** (1670-1729): Congreve gave the English stage a series of masterpieces at once essentially perverse and essentially refined. His first comedy was The Old Bachelor followed by The Double Dealer, Love for Love and The Way of the World. His one tragedy The Mourning Bride was in the vein of the later Elizabethan tragedians. In his comedy Congreve is related to Etherege than to Wycherley. He has neither the brutality nor the satirical violence of Wycherley. His plays are a faithful reflection of the upper-class life of his day but their undoubted immorality is saved from being objectionable by artificial wit, intellect and a total lack of realism. The lack of passion and emotion in these plays gives them a polished, crystal hardness. In the portrayal of elegance and distinction of manners, Congreve has no superiors, and it is doubtful whether he has an equal.

The characters in Restoration comedies are largely types whose distinctions are sufficiently indicated by a study of their names; for example, Sir Fopling Flutter, Colonel Bully etc. They have thus many of the qualities of the Jonsonian 'comedy of humours'. But by the last part of the period there has evolved something distinct – the comedy of manners. A 'manner' does not imply the portrayal of life so much as a genteel, sophisticated brilliant quality, what one critic has called "a grace or habit of refined culture".

#### 4.4.5. The Classic or Augustan Age:

The Classic Age is known by various names. It is often called the Age of Queen Anne. The writers of this period rebelled against the exaggerations of the Elizabethan and Puritan writers. They demanded that poetry should follow exact rules. In this they were influenced by French writers. In the work of Dryden and his followers we see a revival of classicism in the effort to make English literature conform to rules established by the great writers of other nations. The general tendency of literature was to look at life critically, to emphasize intellect rather than imagination, the form rather than the content of a sentence. Writers strove to repress all emotion and enthusiasm, and to use only precise and elegant methods of expression. This is what is often meant by the "classicism" of the age of Pope and Dr. Johnson. The term "classicism" is now often used to designate a considerable part of eighteenth century literature. To avoid this critical difficulty the term "Augustan Age" is preferred, a name chosen by the writers themselves. These writers include Pope, Addison, Swift, Dr. Johnson and Burke. These are the modern parallels to Horace, Virgil, Cicero and all those brilliant writers who made Roman literature famous in the days of Augustus.

**Literary Characteristics:** A new society was evolving. Practical purposes arising from new social and political conditions demanded an expression which could suit to pamphlets, magazines and newspapers. Poetry was inadequate for such a task; hence the development of prose. The development of prose in this age astonishes us by its rapidity and excellence. The graceful elegance of Addison's essays, the terse vigour of Swift's satires, the artistic finish of Fielding's novels, the wonderful eloquence of Gibbon's history and of Burke's orations have no parallel in the poetry of the age. Poetry itself became prosaic in this respect. It was not used for creative works of imagination, but for satire and criticism. The poetry of the first half of the century, as typified in the work of Pope, is polished and witty. But it lacks fire, fine telling, enthusiasm, the glow of the Elizabethan Age and the moral earnestness of Puritanism. The variety and excellence of prose works, and the development of a serviceable prose style, which had been begun by Dryden served to express clearly every human interest and emotion.

**Satire:** In the Restoration age, there developed two tendencies: (i) the tendency to realism in subject matter, and (ii) the tendency to polish and refinement of expression. Both these tendencies were continued in the Augustan Age. These are seen clearly in the poetry of Pope, who brought the couplet to perfection, and in the prose of Addison. A third tendency is shown in the prevalence of satire, resulting from the union of politics with literature. The power of the press had developed and there was a perpetual strife of political parties. Nearly every writer of the first half of the century was used and rewarded by political parties for satirizing their opponents and for advancing their special political interests. Pope was a marked exception. However, he followed the prose writers in using satire too largely in his poetry. Satire has become a literary work which searches out the faults of men or institutions in order to hold them up to ridicule. It is at best a destructive kind of criticism. A satirist is like a labourer who clears away the ruins and rubbish of an old house before the architect and builders begin on a new and beautiful structure. The satires of Pope, Swift, and Addison are the best in the English language.

#### 4.4.6. Alexander Pope (1688-1744)

The work of Pope was a battlefield of criticism. He was a polished literary artist, and had the type of the restraint considered classical. He mechanized verse to suit an age of prose. Actually, Pope represents a reaction against artificiality and a return to nature. He descends directly from Waller and Dryden. He revolts indirectly against Donne. He could not breathe in the heavy air of the metaphysical poets. He is the chief figure in a romantic revolt. In the field of satire and didactic verse, Pope was the undisputed master. His influence dominated the poetry of his age. The majority of English poets looked to him as their model. He was a clear reflection of the spirit of the age in which he lived. There is not an ideal, a belief, a doubt, a fashion, a whim of Queen Anne's time, that is not neatly expressed in his poetry. He gave his whole life to literature and was independent.

**Works of Pope:** For convenience sake Pope's work may be separated into three groups, corresponding to the early, middle, and later periods of his life. In the first he wrote his "Pastorals," "Windsor Forest," "Messiah", "An Essay on Criticism," and "The Rape of the Lock". In the second period, he had his translations of Homer. In the third period he wrote Dunciad and the Epistles.

"An Essay on Criticism" sums up the art of poetry. It is written in heroic couplets. It is a storehouse of critical maxims. "For fools rush in where angels fear to tread"; "To err is human, to forgive divine"; "A little learning is a dangerous thing," and many more like them from "An Essay on Criticism" have found their way into our common speech. This poem made Pope famous.

Based on an actual incident, The Rape of the Lock (1712) became in Pope's hands, a blend of the mock-heroic, the satirical and the fanciful, unmatched in English poetry. The occasion of the famous poem was trivial. A gentleman at the court of Queen Anne, Lord Petre, cut a lock of hair from the curls of a pretty maid of honour, Arabella Fermor. The young lady resented it, and the two families were plunged into a quarrel which was the talk of London. Pope, being appealed to, seized the occasion to construct a long poem in which all the mannerisms of society are pictured in minutest detail and satirized with the most delicate wit. The first edition, consisting of two cantos, was published in 1712. Its instant success caused Pope to lengthen the poem by three more cantos. The poem is modelled after two foreign satires. Pope went far ahead of his masters in style and in delicacy of handling a mock-heroic theme. During his life time Rape of the

Lock was considered as the greatest poem of its kind. The poem is an expression of the artificial life of the age – of its cards, parties, toilettes, lapdogs, tea-drinking, sunff-taking and idle vanities.

The fame of Pope's Iliad was due to the fact that he interpreted Homer in the elegant and artificial language of his own age. It was financially the most successful of his books. Pope translated the entire Iliad and half of the Odyssey. "Essay on Man" is the best known and the most quoted of all Pope's works. Except in form it is not poetry. But it consists of numerous literary onnaments without solid structure of thought to rest upon. The purpose of the poem is, in Pope's words, to "vindicate the ways of God to man." There are no unanswered problems in Pope's philosophy. The vindication is accomplished in four poetical epistles – concerning man's relations to the universe, to himself, to society, and to happiness. The Dunciad began originally as a controversy concerning Shakespeare. Later it turned out to be a coarse and revengeful satire upon all the literary men of the age who had aroused Pope's anger by their criticism or lack of appreciation of his genius.

#### 4.4.7. Jonathan Swift (1667-1745)

Swift won enormous literary power by hard work. He used his power to satirise common humanity. He wrested political power from the hands of the Tories, and used it to insult the very men who had helped him, and who held his fate in their hands. His satire is biting. Against any case of hypocrisy or injustice he sets up a remedy of precisely the same kind. Then he defends his plan with such seriousness that the satire overwhelms the reader.

Swift's two greatest satires are A Tale of a Tub and Gulliver's Travels. The Tale begins as a grim exposure of the alleged weaknesses of three principal forms of religious belief, Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinist, as opposed to the Anglican. But, it ends in a satire upon all science and philosophy. The Tale contains almost every quality Swift possessed – his intellectual power, his polished irony, his savage mockery, his terrifying humour and his immense vitality. In Gulliver's Travels the satire grows more unbearable. This book was not written from any literary motive, but rather as an outlet for the author's own bitterness against fate and human society. It is still read with pleasure, for the interesting adventures of the hero. The Journal to Stella is interesting for two reasons. It is, first, an excellent commentary on contemporary characters and political events. Second, the love passages and purely personal descriptions give us the best picture we posses of Swift himself at the summit of his power and influence.

Swift is the most original writer of his time. He is one of the greatest masters of English prose. His style is simple and straight forward. There is easy rhythm and exquisite cadence in his prose. Directness, vigour and simplicity mark every page of Swift.

Swift's poems, though vigorous and original, are generally satirical and often coarse. He often used his verse to shock the new-born modesty by pointing out some native ugliness which his mind discovered under every beautiful exterior. His poetry has the merits of his prose. He began by writing frigid "Pindaric" odes. One of the earliest and best of his playful pieces is the graceful Baucis and Philemon. The famous Cadenus and Vanessa in a mock classical setting, gives Swift's account of his acquaintance with Hester. His satires on women are some of the most horrible verses ever written. Savagery has full play in his political ballads and skits. On

Poetry: a Rhapsody was thought by Swift to be his best satire. It contains his most frequently quoted lines. His greatest poem, On the Death of Dr. Swift, with its mixture of humour, egotism and pathos, is a moving piece, the last lines being strangely applicable to his actual end.

#### 4.4.8. Joseph Addison (1672-1719):

Like Swift, Addison despised shams. He never lost faith in humanity. In all his satires there is a gentle kindness which makes one think better of his fellowmen, even while he laughs at their little vanities. The tendency of his age was to make virtue appear ridiculous and vice attractive. Addison set himself against this unworthy tendency. To strip off the mask of vice, to show its ugliness and deformity, and to reveal virtue in its own native loveliness was Addison's purpose. Addison seized upon the new social life of the clubs and made it the subject of endless pleasant essays upon types of men and manners. He laid firm foundations for the modern essay.

The most enduring of Addison's works are his famous Essays. These essays are inducement to others to know and to practice the art of gentle living. To an age of coarseness and artificiality he came with a wholesome message of refinement and simplicity. Addison was a successful writer because he had a greater knowledge of life and had greater faith in men. He attacks all vanities and vices of his time with a kindly ridicule and gentle humour. His essays are the best picture of the new social life of England. They advanced the art of literary criticism to a much higher stage than it had ever before reached. They certainly led Englishmen to a better knowledge and appreciation of their own literature.

#### 4.4.9. Richard Steele (1672-1729)

Richard Steele imbibed Restoration impulses and Augustan restraint. He was an Irishman and a soldier, both rake and moralist, finding in himself the sins he was most ready to condemn. He was one of the few writers of his time who had sincere respect for womanhood. Even more than Addison he ridiculed vice and made virtue lovely. He was the originator of The Tatler, and joined with Addison in creating The Spectator, the two periodicals which influenced subsequent literature. He is the original genius of Sir Roger de Coverley, and of many other characters and essays. Steele touched on questions of breeding, good taste, courtesy and chivalry. He set forth a reasonable ideal of a gentleman and taught a new respect for women.

The Tatler and The Spectator: Steele had talent in writing political pamphlets. While writing for several newspapers, the idea occurred to Steele to publish a Paper which should contain political news, the gossip of the clubs and coffeehouses, with some light essays on the life and manners of the age. The immediate result was the famous The Tatler, which appeared on April 12, 1709. The success of this unheard of combination of news, gossip, and essay was great. Not a club or a coffeehouse in London could afford to be without it. At first Steele wrote the entire paper. Later Addison became a regular contributor. Occasionally other writers added essays on the new social life of England. But The Tatler was discontinued after less than two years' life. On March 1, 1711 Steele brought out The Spectator. In the new magazine politics and news were ignored. It was a literary magazine, pure and simple. Its entire contents consisted of a single light essay. In the space of four years Steele and Addison worked together for the two magazines and made them popular. They contributed much for the establishment of the essay as one of the most important forms of modern literature. The literary magazine won its place as the expression of the social life of a nation.

#### 4.4.10. Daniel Defoe (1660-1731):

In spite of Pope's poetic achievement, the beginning of the century is primarily a prose writing period and its most memorable works are in prose. Daniel Defoe is a journalist whose genius is the more astonishing because he had to invent almost the whole of his craft. His prose is of amazing bulk and variety and can be divided into two groups. His political writings include The Shortest Way with the Dissenters and The True-born Englishman containing irony, invective and vigour. Defoe's fiction was produced in the latter part of his life: Moll Flanders, the life of a prostitute; Roxana, the life of a great courtesan; Memoirs of a Cavalier; The Life of Captain George Carlton; The Life of Captain Singleton; A Journal of the Plague Year (i.e. 1665); The Life of John Sheppard, the highway man; The History of Colonel Jacque, another highwayman; and the rest. Robinson Crusoe is one of those numerous accounts of imaginary voyages in which Defoe delighted. It tells the story of Crusoe's sojourn on a desert island, which has become a tale of universal appeal. There was no contemporary writer who so broadened the basis of literature as Defoe, or appealed to so wide a circle of readers – to all, in fact, who were able to read. To the development of the novel Defoe's contribution is priceless.

#### 4.4.11. The Transition Period of 18<sup>th</sup> Century (1740-1800):

The age of Johnson is considered an age of transition. Two movements can be clearly observed in the writing of the time, namely:

- a) The allegiance to the old order of classicism represented by Samuel Johnson.
- b) The search after the new order of Romanticism. It began as early as 1730, with the publication of Thomson's Seasons.

#### 4.4.12. Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-84):

Johnson was the son of a bookseller, privately educated and later in Oxford. He was a poor scholar but with a powerful and aspiring mind. From an obscure position, he became a poet when he published London (1738) and soon he became one of the literary dictators of London, surrounded by a circle of brilliant men. As a poet, Johnson, produced two satires, London and The Vanity of Human Wishes, and a blank verse tragedy Irene. But poetry was the least part of his considerable output. Forced to do work of all sorts by the publishers on whom he depended for a livelihood, he was translator, journalist, lexicographer, commentator, novelist, biographer, and finally literary critic. To these varied tasks he brought the authority of his strong brain.

Johnson's claims to be called a first-rate writer must rest on his prose. His earliest work appeared in Cave's The Gentleman's Magazine between the years 1738-1744. Then in 1747, he began work on his Dictionary of the English Language. This was his greatest contribution to scholarship. It has its weaknesses but it was vastly superior to any previous dictionary. It is remarkable for the precision of its definitions and its feeling for the correct use of words. While working on this project he also wrote periodical essays for The Rambler (1750-52). During the period 1758-60, he also contributed a series of papers under the title of The Idler, to the Universal Chronicle or Weekly Gazette. He wrote Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia (1759), under the pressure of necessity. He meant it to be a philosophical novel, but it is really a number of Rambler, essays, strung together through the personality of an inquiring young prince called Rasselas.

Then came Johnson's second truly great work – his fine edition of Shakespeare (1765). Based on a wide reading in Elizabethan literature, the edition aimed at the restoration of the original text wherever possible and the clearing away of the jungle of fanciful conjecture which had led to its corruption. The Preface is remarkable for its forthright honesty in recognizing Shakespeare's faults and in defending him against the charge of having ignored the classical unities, and for its analysis of the causes of corruption in the text. Johnson's 'Preface' to his Shakespeare is a landmark, not only in Shakespearean scholarship, but in English criticism as a whole.

In his later years Johnson wrote a travel book A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland (1775) which shows his faculty of narrative. His last great work was The Lives of the Poets (1777-81), planned as a series of introductions to the works of fifty-two poets, belonging to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He applied the rules of classical criticism in his assessment. The Lives display a humanity and an accuracy of judgement which have ensured them a permanent place in English criticism,

Nevertheless Johnson the man was greater than Johnson the writer. Most of the qualities of his head and heart are known from Boswell's faithful chronicle Life of Samuel Johnson. In his early work, Johnson's style was pompous, verbose, artificial and highly Latinized. His later prose has the ease, lucidity, force and directness of his conversation.

#### 4.4.13. Oliver Goldsmith (1728-74):

A typical example of the transition poet is Oliver Goldsmith. He was the son of a poor curate, studied in Trinity college, Dublin. He tried various careers later but never had a settled career. In time, by their sheer merit his writings drew the attention of famous persons like Dr. Johnson and Charles James Fox, the eminent politician. Recognition came with a rush and with it money and fame; but his feckless habits kept him poor till his death in 1774.

Though his poetical production is not large, it is notable. His first poem The Traveller (1764), deals with his wanderings through Europe: it is a series of descriptions and criticisms of the places and peoples of which he had experience, written with charm and grace. In 1770 he published his Deserted Village, an idealization of the Irish village of Lissoy in which his childhood passed. Goldsmith's peculiar humour and pathos are hard to analyse. His miscellaneous poems are important for his humour and pathos : The Hermit, a sentimental ballad; the witty Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog.

Goldsmith wrote two prose-comedies, both of which rank high among their class to protest against the flood of sentimentalism and 'genteelness' which was invading the stage. The first, called The Good-natur'd Man (1768), is not so good as the second, She Stoops to Conquer (1773). Based on the Restoration Comedy, they lack the Restoration grossness. The second play had an immense popularity.

Goldsmith's prose is of astonishing range and volume. The Citizen of the World (1759) is his work of fiction, a series of imaginary letters from a Chinaman whose comments on English society are both simple and shrewd. His other important novel is The Vicar of Wakefield (1766),

which is in the first rank of eighteenth century novels. It narrates the adventures of Dr. Primrose, the loss of whose fortune reduces him to the position of the parson of a small village, and how the good man bears his misfortune with fortitude.

In addition Goldsmith produced a great mass of back-work on historical and scientific topics. To sum up. Goldsmith's work is important for its variety and high quality, particularly as he is a transitional poet.

**Transitional Poets:** Apart from Goldsmith, the other notable transitional poets were James Thomson (1700-48), Thomas Gray (1716-71), William Collins (1721-59), William Cowper (1731-1800), George Crabbe (1754-1832). We can see an enlightened sympathy for the poor and oppressed.

#### 4.4.14. Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816):

Sheridan was born in Dublin, the son of an actor-manager, Thomas Sheridan, and was educated at Harrow. He was intended to read law but turned to literature. At the age of twenty-three he wrote his first play The Rivals (1775); followed by The School for Scandal (1777), and The Critic (1779). His other works are St. Patrick's Day: or the Scheming Lieutenant, The Duenna, A Trip to Scarborough. The Critic was an attack on the popular sentimental drama, and has been called the best burlesque of its age.

Endowed with more sparkling and exhilarating wit than Goldsmith, Sheridan revived the comedy of Vanbrugh and Congreve without their coarseness and cynicism. He excels at epigram; no author is more witty. His prose comedies all resemble the best of the Restoration comedies without the immorality of the Restoration plays. Again we see the polite world of fashion, but Sheridan makes its vices appear foolish by exaggerating them in humorous portraiture. The plots are ingenious and effective, full of intrigue.

#### 4.4.15. The Novelists:

Toward the middle of the century came the swift and abundant blossoming of the novel, raising the type to the rank of, one of the major species of literature. Richardson's Pamela had the requisites of plot, characters, and dialogue but the novel-method was concealed under the clumsy disguise of a series of letters. Fielding shows us the novel in its maturity; with him the principles of the novel were established. Smollett reverted to the picaresque manner used by Defoe before him. Sterne made the novel sentimental and fantastic. The Radcliffe novels, popular toward the end of the century, made fiction terrific.

##### a) Samuel Richardson (1689-1761):

Richardson was a prosperous printer. Weakly and timid by choice he sought feminine society. Being a puritan he guided them in the composition of their love-letters and began by writing for them little edifying tales. He was fifty years old when he printed a novel of his own Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded (1740). The book, which takes the form of a series of letters, deals with the fortunes of Pamela, a poor and virtuous maid, who resists, then finally marries and afterwards reforms her wicked master. The work was instantly successful. Richardson's next

novel, which was also constructed in the form of letters was Clarissa Harlowe (1747-48). This treats of the perfidy of men, as illustrated in the tragedy of the heroine, who is persecuted by the villainous Lovelace. Its success was immense, not only in England but on the continent. The novel has a strong unity equal to that of the best classical tragedy. His third and last novel, also in letter form, was The History of Sir Charles Grandison (1754). Richardson took a man as hero, and attempted to make of him the pattern of a Christian gentleman. In spite of very fine passages, this novel, lacking the freshness of Pamela and the tragic strength of Clarissa, is inferior to them.

The most striking feature of Richardson's novels is his moral purpose. The books are long partly because of the epistolary method and partly his use of minute detail. His greatest ability lies in characterization. His psychological insight into human motives and feelings, and particularly his understanding of the feminine heart, has seldom been surpassed since his day.

### **b) Henry Fielding (1707-54):**

The low vitality of Richardson's characters provoked the mocking spirit of Fielding and led him to produce a very different kind of fiction. Fielding came of a good family, but was without fortune; and while he studied law he began to write for the stage and the newspapers. In 1742 he wrote Joseph Andrews, which begins in laughter at the namby-pamby Pamela of Richardson, but turns little by little into a novel of adventure. His next works are A Journey from this World to the Next (1743) and Jonathan Wild the Great (1743). The latter book is the biography of the famous thief and 'thief-taker' who was hanged at New gate. Here Fielding's ironic power resembles that of Swift.

Fielding's greatest novel Tom Jones (1749) completes and perfects his achievement. It is the story of a foundling whose open, generous, and passionate nature leads him into a long series of adventures. This offered Fielding an opportunity of drawing from life many scenes of the human comedy. He gives an eminently practical morality of the philanthropist, and indeed through his books Fielding was a collaborator in the reform – movement of the end of the century. His last novel, Amelia (1751), though possessing power and interest, lacks the spontaneity of its great predecessor.

Like Richardson, Fielding had a genius for sounding the emotions of the human heart but in a different manner. His characters possess a breadth, humanity, and attraction denied to Richardson's. Realism is the keynote of all his work. He hated hypocrisy and his humour is boisterous. Fielding is breezy, bustling and energetic in his narrative.

### **c) Tobias Smollett (1721-71):**

A new note was introduced into the novel by the Scotsman Smollett, surgeon and journalist, who put all the violence of his temperament into his books. His novel Roderick Random (1748) was highly successful, which is an example of the 'picaresque' novel. The hero is a victim of brutality who himself becomes brutal in his turn. He is hard, violent, rancorous, with very little capacity for affection in his nature. The most striking novelty of the book lies in its sea-scenes and types of sea-men.



His other novels are The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle (1751), The Adventures of Ferdinand, Count Fathom (1753), The Adventures of Sir Lancelot Greaves (1762), and The Expedition of Humphry Clinker (1771). Most of Smollett's characters are disreputable; the plots are formless narratives of travel and adventure; and a coarse and brutal humour is present all through. Smollett is the first of the English novelists to introduce the naval type of characters.

#### d) Laurence Sterne (1713-68):

Sterne was born in Ireland, educated at Cambridge, and entered the Church. He was 47 when he began to publish his Tristram Shandy (1760-7), which brought him immediate fame. It is a strange book, reflecting an ambiguous nature, that of a man who is weak and changeable, without firmness of character or moral supports. His other novel is A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy (1768). Unique in literature, these books are the accurate reflection of the singular personality of their author. They are made up of Sterne's peculiar blend of pathos and humour. With Sterne, the novel is transformed. Adventure no longer finds any place in it.

#### 4.4.16. Prose Writers:

The last third of the 18<sup>th</sup> century also produced some great prose writers. **Edmund Burke** (1729-97) bestowed on politics the resources of a philosophic mind enriched by extensive reading and ripe experience. His vast writing can be divided into two groups: purely philosophical writings, and his political pamphlets and speeches. Burke is recognized as one of the masters of English prose.

**Edward Gibbon** (1737-94) displays the rationalistic temper at its best in the domain of history. Gibbon was, after Burke, the greatest prose-writer of the generation. But he detached himself from the present in order to paint a picture of the past. He took for subject The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, a vast work published at intervals between 1776 and 1788. In it he describes the growth and development of Christianity covering more than a thousand years. To most judges The Decline and Fall ranks as one of the greatest of historical works, and is a worthy example of what a history ought to be.

#### 4.4.17. Conclusion:

The Post-Restoration period is often set up as the converse of the previous Elizabethan Age. It is called 'classical' as opposed to the Elizabethan 'romanticism'. The authors during this time turned to the great classical writers, in particular to the Latin writers, for guidance and inspiration. This habit, quite noticeable during the time of Dryden, deepened and hardened during the succeeding era of Pope. Dryden is the first great exponent of the new ideas that were to dominate English literature till the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The lyric and ode forms continue and Dryden is the best of the lyrical poets. The age also abounds in satirical writing and also narrative poetry. In drama the comedy of 'humours' is dying out, and is replaced by the comedy of 'manners'. We can clearly see the development of the 'heroic couplet', which spread throughout poetry and through much of drama during Pope's time. The age of Pope was an age of tolerance, moderation, and common sense, which, in cultured circles at least, sought to refine manners and introduce into life the rule of sweet reasonableness. Now the drift away from the poetry of passion was more prominent; the ideals of 'wit' and 'common sense' were vigorously pursued, and the lyrical

note almost unheard. There was a desire for neatness, for edge in style, and for correctness in technique. This age produced no great poet except Pope, while Swift, Addison, Steele, Defoe are prose writers of a very high quality.

The period of Dr. Johnson marks the transition period of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century (1740-1770). Johnson represents the current of tradition, hostile to innovation, which is one of the aspects of the age. In the realm of poetry it was a period of clever and varied, though still timid, experiments. But above all, it was the period of rich prose and progressing along modern paths. The middle of the century saw the first great development of the novel – it gave the world a series of widely differing masterpieces from Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, Goldsmith and Sterne. The novel took the place of the theatre, which was now losing its vigour and originality. Goldsmith and Sheridan were the only significant dramatists at this time.

#### 4.4.18. Sample Questions:

1. What are the literary characteristics of the Age of Pope?
2. Write a note on 'Satire'.
3. What is the contribution of Alexander Pope to British Literature?
4. What is the contribution of Addison and Steele to the development of English prose?
5. Comment on the achievement of Dr. Johnson.

#### 4.4.19. Suggested Reading:

1. Cambridge History of English Literature Vol. 9 From Steele to Pope, Cambridge University Press.
2. Long. English Literature: Its History and Its Significance.
3. Boris Ford. The Pelican Guide to English Literature (Penguin),
4. The Teach Yourself History of English Literature To The English Renascence, Vol.2.
5. George Sampson. Revised by R.C. Churchill. The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature.
6. Harry Blamires. A Short History of English Literature (ELBS).

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**Dr. Y.S.R. Anjaneyulu**

**Lesson – 4.5****THE AGE OF WORDSWORTH****4.5.1. Objective:**

The objectives of this lesson are

- to introduce English Romanticism and its various practitioners of poetry and prose.
- to trace the features of the romantic movement in literature.
- to understand the development of various literary forms.

**Structure:**

- 4.5.2. Introduction**
- 4.5.3. The New School**
  - (a) **Robert Burns**
  - (b) **William Blake**
- 4.5.4. The Romantics**
  - (a) **William Wordsworth**
  - (b) **Lyrical Ballads**
  - (c) **S.T. Coleridge**
  - (d) **Robert Southey**
- 4.5.5. The Younger Romantics**
  - (a) **Lord Byron**
  - (b) **P.B. Shelley**
  - (c) **John Keats**
  - (d) **Negative Capability**
- 4.5.6. The Novelists**
  - (a) **Walter Scott**
  - (b) **Jane Austen**
- 4.5.7. Essayists**
- 4.5.8. Conclusion**
- 4.5.9. Sample Questions**
- 4.5.10. Reference Books**

**4.5.2. Introduction:**

The name of William Wordsworth is synonymous with Romanticism in English literature. The romantic period in Britain is usually taken to run between 1798, the year in which Coleridge and Wordsworth published the first edition of The Lyrical Ballads and 1832, when Sir Walter Scott and Goethe died.

Romanticism is an emotional tide which ebbs and flows throughout literary history. It is the expression in terms of art of sharpened sensibilities and heightened imaginative feeling. Curiosity and the love of beauty are integral factors in Romanticism, the former intellectual and the latter emotional. Romanticism, when it touches philosophy, favours mysticism and idealism. The awakened sensibility led to the study of the past. It was because many thought they saw in medievalism a richer inspiration. They turned from modern conditions of life towards the folk-lore and legendary wealth of the Middle Ages. The element of mysticism in mediaeval life appealed, heightened by the passage of time and the unlikeness of life then to life under modern conditions.

An instinct for the elemental simplicities of life was an important aspect of Romanticism. Rousseau emphasised the dignity of man and dwelt upon the transcendent power of human love. The Romantic poets found inspiration in the simplicities of everyday life. An ordinary sunset, a walk over the hills, a cluster of spring flowers, the west wind, the song of the nightingale, a cottage girl – are a few of the subjects that inspired the Romanticists.

The eighteenth century was dominated by the philosophy of Locke and the scientific attitude of Newton. Both considered the world to be like a machine. They believed in god, because a machine implies a mechanic. In this scheme man had only a passive place. But the romanticists considered every individual to be unique having his own unfathomable world of thought and feeling. They considered Imagination to be divine and a vital activity of the mind. They wished to penetrate into the abiding reality that lies behind visible things. They believe they could have a glimpse of reality only through the divine power of imagination. According to Bowra, “The essence of Romantic imagination is that it fashions shapes which display these unseen forces at work, which cannot be presented except in particular instances.”

Though all the Romantic poets believed in reality and based their poetry on it, they approached it through different ways. They felt that it was their task to find through imagination some divine order which may explain the world of reality. They escape from the shadowy reality of the material world into the ultimate reality of spiritualism. The vision of archetypal reality does not dwell for long with the poet. He attempts to find some correspondence between actuality and desire. When he finds some approximation between the two, he is filled with rapture. If not he is filled with melancholy. Wordsworth is more consistently a poet of joy. He perceives a divine order in nature. If he does not find it, he can impose it. But Shelley and Keats are subject to fits of rapture and melancholy.

In turning his back on the life of men in cities, the Romantic poet has three courses. He may return to Nature, he may return to the past, or he may go into the world of dreams. While all Romantic poets love Nature, Wordsworth loves it in a special way. Keats loves the past, specially the Greek and the Mediaeval world, and Coleridge loves dreams, while Shelley dreams of the bright future of humanity. The Romantic poets invented many symbols to express their emotions. They made the language suggestive. They gave new overtones and meaning to words. They were masters of rhythm and music. They rescued poetry from the barrenness of classicism and gave it a new richness and content.

### **4.5.3. The New School:**

Some of the poets who wrote in the middle and later years of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and who abandoned the classical tradition, were Burns and Blake. In their generation they came too early to be definitely included in the school of Wordsworth and Coleridge, but in their work they are

often as romantically inclined as any of their great successors. Burns is one of the greatest of Wordsworth's poetical forbears. With the appearance of Burns we can say that the day of Romanticism is come.

**(a) Robert Burns (1759-96):**

Burns taught poetry, but by altogether different means, 'to build a princely throne on humble truth'. He was a real peasant who drove the plough as he hummed his songs, and who knew all the wretchedness of the countryman's life but knew as well its joys and mirth. The young Scotsman, Robert Burns, the son of a farmer and a farmer himself, published in 1786 his volume of Poems. It is a collection of lively spirited verses which, though based on no premeditated theory, were destined to shape the path towards the poetic revolution.

His work includes one tale Tam O' Shanter, one longish descriptive piece The Cotter's Saturday Night, more than 20 songs, and a great number of short epistles, epigrams, elegies and poems. He caused a break with conventional poetry by writing popular Scottish poetry and in a Scottish tongue. Burns put into his poetry his passions, joys and sufferings; his revolts against Presbyterian tyranny; a whole personal poetry in contrast with the usual cold and timid formality of the century.

**(b) William Blake (1757-1827):**

The publication of Blake's early verse marked him as a poet of promise. His Poetical Sketches (1783) is a series of imitative poems, in which he experimented with various verse forms in the manner of Shakespeare, Milton and Spenser. The first fruits of his work were the Songs of Innocence (1789), a volume remarkable both for the beauty of the verse and the accompanying decorative designs. In 1794 came the Songs of Experience. In his earlier songs he had given us his vision of the beauty in life. In the latter songs he deals with the ugliness in life that experience has taught him. With this volume Blake's finest work as a poet closes. His mystical faculty henceforth found a more satisfying expression in decorative design. From 1796 he was actively concerned in the art of illustration. His other works are The Book of Thel, The French Revolution, The Visions of the Daughters of Albion, America, and Europe, which formed a series of revolutionary prophetic books.

The genius of Blake, whether as poet or artist, was unrecognized by the public at large during his lifetime. His hold upon the spiritual world comforted and sustained him throughout. The visionary in him overpowers the artist and a wild confusion of imagery often blurs his work. He drew inspiration from Nature. He cared for the splendour of human love. His visionary works are The First Book of Urizen, The Book of Ahania, The Book of Los, and The Song of Los.

Both naturalism and mysticism of the Romantic revival found expression in Blake. On the naturalistic side he deals with the simplest phases of life; with the love of flowers, hills, and streams, the blue sky, the brooding clouds. And yet the mystical vision of the poet always transforms these familiar things into something strange and wonderful. Cruelty to animals incensed Blake. He would give them the same freedom he wished for humankind. Mysticism in poetry is usually blended with a wistful melancholy. But Blake is an exception. He is a joyful mystic; for him the morning stars sing together and the splendour of life far exceeds its shadows. There are no mournful regrets in his verse, no sighing for a day that is dead. His mysticism was not an aspiration for the future; it was a realization of the present. The only unreality for Blake was the external world; the great reality was the world of his visions.

Blake's poetry comes with a force because it finds release of his creative energy. C.M. Bowra says that, "Because Blake pierced beyond the visible world to these eternal powers and made them his daily company, he was able to give his poetry the clarity and brightness of vision."

#### **4.5.4. The Romantics:**

The Romantic movement produced two generations of great poets. To the elder generation belong Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey and Scott and to the younger generation belong Byron, Shelley and Keats. According to Chew and Altick, the first clear voice of Romanticism was that of William Blake. It was almost unheeded because Blake was merely a creative artist. Wordsworth and Coleridge were not merely artists; they were also theorists and critics. Though the Romantic characteristics of both groups are similar in a broad sense, there is a great difference between the poetry of the elder Romantics and the younger romantics.

On account of their residing in the neighbourhood of Cumberland, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey were called 'The Lake School of Poets.' These poets of the first generation of Romanticism realised the moral dignity of the poor and humble rustics, who had been attached to the soil for hundreds of years. They went beyond the neo-classical century of Reason and good manners to the faith and patriotism of common English people. In the social sphere they stressed the noble simplicity of a class in which traditional values were still prevalent. They opposed the orthodox habits of language and style and were in moral harmony with a majority of the public. They were different from their contemporaries only in their refined sensibility, imagination and spiritual outlook. But they were not rebels against society. "The Romanticism of the Lake Poets", says Cazamian, "is a kind of purification and deepening of normal existence; it fronts society as an example and a permanent solicitation. It takes its stand upon the emotions that are common to all and only seeks by stimulating them, to idealize them into poetry." These poets were members of the society trying to sublimate its ideals and to divert its attention to spiritual realities.

##### **(a) William Wordsworth (1770-1850):**

William Wordsworth was born in Cockermouth in Cumberland, a district in the north of England, famous for mountains, rivers and lakes. He had realized early in life the bond between nature and human life. He actually felt a moral and spiritual presence in nature. His stay at Cambridge made him feel that he was out of element there, though it enabled him to study lot of English and Italian poetry. A holiday tour in 1790 in Switzerland and France brought him into the ardent Revolutionary atmosphere of the Continent. He stayed for some time in London. London did not take his youthful imagination by storm. But Paris rather than London obsessed his youthful imagination. During the period of disillusionment his greatest comforter was his sister Dorothy. In 1795, he established himself in Racedown with Dorothy. He met Coleridge in 1797, and the three took a house for themselves at Afloxden.

Coleridge encouraged Wordsworth on political composition. When they became intimate friends, Coleridge's innate transcendentalism began to affect Wordsworth. Coleridge talked eloquently to Wordsworth on Plato and the neo-Platonists, the pantheistic system and the intuitional religion of the theosophists. A new world was opened to Wordsworth who had not yet gone beyond rationalism of the eighteenth century. Gradually Wordsworth built his own doctrine. He would show men the way to wisdom and happiness. He would, from his country retreat, give out his views of nature, man and society. He thought he knew the reasons why most men in his generation had fallen into pessimism and misanthropy. He now believed in the restorative power

of nature, in the essential goodness of man's heart when unadulterated by the pride of intellect. He further believed in the greatness of the senses which would drink in infinite joys and profound lessons of wisdom. Thus he planned his Recluse as early as March 1798, 'the first great philosophical poem in existence', as Coleridge anticipated.

### **(b) Lyrical ballads (1798):**

After some fruitless attempts at collaboration, Wordsworth and Coleridge agreed to divide the field of poetry between themselves. To the share of Coleridge fell such subjects as were supernatural and romantic. Wordsworth's part was to be the events of everyday life, by preference in its humblest form. The characters and incidents of his poems "were to be such as will be found in every village and its vicinity where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them, or to notice them when they present themselves." Thus Coleridge sang The Ancient Mariner while Wordsworth told the tales Good Blake and Simon Lee. Wordsworth's ballads are humble practical illustrations of the philosophy he was at this time promulgating in lofty blank verse.

The first edition of Lyrical Ballads appeared in 1798 anonymously. Coleridge contributed four poems and Wordsworth nineteen poems. The Lyrical Ballads presented a challenge to the poetry-reading habits of the age, and the book was adversely criticized. A second edition appeared in 1800 under Wordsworth's name alone. In this edition Wordsworth had to write his Preface to justify his view of poetry. His Preface is the pioneer work of Romantic criticism. He explains the objective with which the poems were written. The purpose was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to describe them, as far as possible in a selection of a language really used by men.

The forms Wordsworth adopts are the narrative, the lyrical, the elegiac, and the sonnet. His narrative poetry is sometimes cast into heroic metre, sometimes into that of the ballad, and in each medium he achieved distinction. The full force of his genius is best displayed in elegiac, sonnet and lyric forms. Wordsworth composed his elegiac poems and odes in his highest moments. They exhibit his power of fusing metaphysical thought with lyrical feeling. He brought a freshness and pensive sweetness to his lyrics that gave them an original place in lyric writing. He was also a master of sonnets and wrote about 500 sonnets. He did valuable service to English poetry by writing sonnets. Keats and Rossetti took the hint from him and developed it still further.

Bradley points out that Wordsworth is the most original of English poets. He is a poet of nature and man, and all his poems are concerned with personal experience, which is unique and original. His originality lies in the fact that everywhere he gives us his own feelings, reflections, reminiscences and visions. He is a poet of "the egotistical sublime." According to Arnold, Wordsworth is a great poet of joy "because of the extraordinary power with which, in case after case, he shows us this joy, and renders it so as to make us share it."

### **(c) Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834):**

Coleridge entered Cambridge in 1791. He began his friendship with Robert Southey in 1794. During his stay at Cambridge (1791-94), under the influence of Southey he became a revolutionist. In 1796 he published his first volume, Poems on Various Subjects. The memorable friendship and the stimulus companionship of Wordsworth helped to mature Coleridge's poetic genius. His marriage in 1795 to Sarah did not prove a happy one. Lyrical Ballads (1798), the fruit of a walking tour, brought him fame. Early in the new century Coleridge's health broke down. To forget his physical pain, he became a slave to opium. His health was on a perpetual see-saw. His

imaginative powers, excited to additional brilliance by the narcotic, flamed out at intervals. In 1819 he received a fresh blow by the expulsion of his son from Oxford. From then until his death in 1834 he never regained his health, except for brief intervals.

According to C.M. Bowra, "Coleridge's supreme contribution to poetry was the three poems and of all English Romantic master-pieces they are the most unusual and the most romantic". The three poems are "Christabel", "The Ancient Mariner" and "Kubla Khan." All the three poems are concerned with the supernatural. These poems are the full flowering of his genius. There are two outstanding characteristics in Coleridge's poetry; the first a physical, the second an intellectual quality. The physical element lies in its pervading sense of mystery; the intellectual in the crystalline simplicity with which this sense of mystery is expressed. His supreme strength lay in his marvellous dream faculty. It is the root of his greatness as poet and his weakness as a man. There is no finer dreamer in English verse.

Even more important than Coleridge's poetic work is his critical work, of which his Biographia Literaria is the greatest. He says that he was interested in the question of imagination by reading Wordsworth's poetry. Coleridge's theory of *Exemplastic Imagination* is his great contribution to Romantic criticism. He distinguishes between primary imagination which all of us possess and secondary imagination which the poets possess. There is not much difference between the two. Both are divine. Through imagination the poets create, and by doing so share in the Divine joy of creation. All great Romantic poetry is based on Imagination and Coleridge has given its theory.

#### **(d) Robert Southey (1774 – 1843):**

Robert Southey at one time was closely associated with Wordsworth and Coleridge. He was educated at Oxford. A short sojourn in Portugal gave him a taste for the literature of the South. In 1813 he had been made Poet Laureate. He did good solid work for the Quarterly Review. Southey played a good part in the literary history of the Romantic revival. His best verse was written prior to the turn of the eighteenth century. True to the fashion of the times, he turned his hand to ballad work. His contribution is distinctive and original. His poems, which are of great bulk, include Joan of Arc, Thalaba, The Destroyer, the Curse of Kehama, and Roderick, the Last of the Goths. The chief feature of Southey's poetry is its preference for outlandish settings.

Southey's prose is better than his verse. Indeed, the weakness of his verse became positive merits in the prose. The clear style gives value to such subjects as the lives of Wesley, or that of Nelson. In many ways it is like the great prose of the eighteenth century. He is at his best when purely objective.

#### **4.5.5. The Younger Romantics:**

The second generation of Romantic poets (Byron, Shelley and Keats) developed a spirit of moral and intellectual revolt. They received the heritage of revolutionary thought. They glorified the revolution and under its psychological influence intensified their ideas of liberty and rebellion. The revolt of passion against reason was carried to its logical end by the younger Romantics. This unlimited freedom found expression in Byron's non-moral cynicism, in Shelley's ecstatic and humanitarian pantheism and in Keats' sensuousness. These poets present a kind of moral anarchy.

#### **(a) Lord Byron (1788 – 1824):**

More than any other English writer, Lord Byron is representative and expresses the spirit of rebellion that was characteristic of his age. From his father and mother he inherited an irritable and volcanic character. His first book of verse Hours of Idleness (1808) was ferociously attacked



by The Edinburgh Review. Byron replied to it by a vigorous satire English Bards and Scotch Reviewers. A town on the continent 1809 – 11 furnished material for the first two cantos of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage (1812). It brought him great success. He then produced some fine verse romances like The Giaour and The Bride of Abydos in 1813, The Corsair and Lara in 1814, The Siege of Corinth and Parisina in 1815. He married in 1815 and a year later the couple separated on April 21, 1816. Four days later, Byron left England never to return. The rest of his life was spent on the continent. It was during this period he produced his greatest work. He added several great satirical poems, the most notable of which are Beppo (1818), The Vision of Judgment (1822), directed mainly against Southey, and the longest of all, Don Juan (1823). Manfred (1817) Cain (1821) were some of Byron's dramas written as blank verse tragedies. In the end, weary of everything, of fame, of poetry, even of himself, he threw himself into the cause of Greece, then struggling for freedom against the Turks. He died of a fever in 1824 during the battle.

The word 'Byronism' now denotes the spirit of gloom, satiety and unrest, which is characteristic of most of his writing. His vigour is destructive. He gives us nothing of the social aspirations of the Revolution. He had no faith in the older order and no new faith to offer. Vanity of vanities is the key-note of his poetry. His heroes are pirates, outlaws, out-castes, all in revolt against society with Satanic power.

#### **(b) Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822):**

Shelley is a revolutionary idealist, and a prophet of faith and hope in a world which had lost both. He was bitterly opposed to the existing state of society. He spoke and wrote as he thought. While at Oxford in 1808, he was expelled for having written a pamphlet on "The Necessity of Atheism." He left for London with the impression that the world was against him and a determination henceforth to be against the world.

Shelley exhaled verse as a flower spreads fragrance. He was a reformer as well as a poet. He was not interested in the past, but was mindful of the present. His eyes were fixed intensely on the future. The ideas he gathered from Locke, Hume, Rousseau, Holbach and Godwin found their literary expression in Queen Mab. The poem was begun in 1810, when Shelley was eighteen and was completed in two years. Queen Mab is the poet's mouthpiece. Through her mouth Shelley condemns priests, kings and statesmen, human institutions such as marriage and commerce and the Christian religion. Mab reveals the future state of the work which will be saved by a Saviour. The Saviour will be an atheist. At the end Mab says that there is no God. The ultimate power is a natural order called 'Necessity'. This is the basis of Shelley's philosophy which he expounds in all his works.

In Alastor (1816) Shelley found his true greatness for the first time. In Prometheus Unbound (1819) Shelley's thirst for freedom reappears in a noble and expansive setting. In the play The Cenci (1819) Shelley has proved his dramatic talent; the play has more points in common with the Greek drama. The year 1820 sees the birth of Shelley's most exquisite imaginings. Of these, The Witch of Atlas and Epipsychidion are the most ambitious. The treatment is delicately fantastic and the spell of fantasy is never rudely broken.

Shelley's genius exults in his lyrical pieces. "Ode to the West Wind" (1819), "The Cloud" and "The Skylark" (1820) are his most popular lyrics. Adonais (1821), a noble and eloquent elegy celebrating his love and admiration of a brother poet, is the finest of his non-lyrical pieces; it is a lament for the death of Keats modelled on the classical elegy. Of his prose work The Defence of Poetry (1821) is soundly written and is a strong exposition of the Romantic point of view.

Shelley is intensely human and vividly passionate. He is far more easily stirred by an idea than by a person. His subtle intellect exercised a cooling and impersonal influence upon his imaginative life. Liberty for the down-trodden, hope for the oppressed, peace for the storm-tossed are the things that fire his songs and stir his imagination to its depths. Pervading Shelley's work is the implicit belief that the human race is perfect and will reach a golden age of material and spiritual happiness.

**(c) John Keats (1795 – 1821):**

Keats from his boyhood was interested in literature. Classical antiquity especially appealed to him. At fifteen he was apprenticed to a surgeon for five years. He soon gave up all thought of a medical career and devoted himself to literature. Spenser had been his first enchanter and the second was Homer. After poring over Chapman's Iliad and Odyssey with fascinated delight he wrote his fine sonnet "On Chapman's Homer" in 1816. Wordsworth, Lamb, Leigh Hunt and Shelley fed Keats' poetic enthusiasm. After publishing his first volume of verse in 1817, Keats went to the Isle of Wight for the ripening of his powers. He returned to London at the close of the year. In 1818 he wrote Endymion, a remarkable poem but which elicited savage criticism. Isabella (1818) is a version of a tale from Boccaccio. In Hyperion (1818) Keats took up the epic theme of the primeval struggle between the older race of gods and the younger divinities. Both in style and structure the poem is modelled on Paradise Lost. In 1818 his brother Tom died of consumption, while his other brother, George immigrated to America. Keats himself fell ill. While his body was wasting away, his imagination was becoming more vital, his Creative power more wonderful. In 1819 he wrote "The Eve of St. Agnes", the ballad "La Belle Dame Sans Merci", and the unfinished "Eve of St. Mark." About the same time he wrote his great odes. Meanwhile Keats had fallen in love with Fanny Brawne. His Lamia and Other Poems (1820) was well received. He was now seriously ill with consumption. In September 1820, he sailed for Italy and died in Rome in 1821.

Keats is in many ways the most romantic of all Romantic poets. Other Romantic poets have some political or social comment in their poetry. But the poetry of Keats is not a vehicle of any prophecy or any message. It is poetry for its own sake. It is, therefore, the purest poetry. Romantic poetry is more or less escapist. The Romantic poet seeks an escape from the hard realities of life to a world of romance and beauty. Keats is the most romantic of all the poets in the sense that he is the most escapist of them all. But he does not have a desire to overthrow the tyrants nor does he think of a better world.

The great odes – 'To a Nightingale', 'On a Grecian Urn', 'To Psyche', 'On Melancholy', 'To Autumn' – were nearly all written in 1819 and stand for flawless perfection. The odes are experiments in verse form based on the sonnet. As a sonneteer Keats ranks with the greatest English poets. The themes of Keats' poetry are romantic in their nature. Most of his poetry is devoted to the quest of beauty. Beauty is Deity. Beauty for him is synonymous with truth. A thing of beauty, for him, is a joy for ever. Beauty is his religion. In the pursuit of beauty he completely forgets himself and the world around him. Keats sees beauty in the ordinary things of nature. Love, chivalry, adventure and pathos are some of the themes of his poems. Another strain that runs through his poetry is the fear of death. Another favourite theme of his poems is disappointment in love and its desolation as we find in "La Belle Dame Sans Merci."

The brief span of Keats' life falls within the age of Romantic Revival and he has fully imbibed the spirit of his age. His poetry is a fine example of highly romantic poetry. In fact, it has touched all the aspects of Romantic poetry – love of beauty, love of nature, love of the past, supernaturalism, glow of emotion and the power of imagination.

**(d) Negative Capability:**

Keats considered poetry to be the embodiment of the ripest and fullest experience mankind is capable of. Poetry should not have “a palpable design upon us.” Poetry, Keats recommends, should be the outcome of the “Negative Capability” which is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts and is free of any irritable reaching out after fact and reason.

Negative Capability is not the egotistic self-assertion, but the negation of the self which characterized Shakespeare. It is a capacity for objectivity in the midst of terrible personal suffering, and the capacity to come to terms with this misery, not through fact and reason, but through an understanding of its true nature. It may be called acceptance. It involves the ability to identify oneself with the subject of one’s poetry or art. Shakespeare could enter and merge into the personality of King Lear in his madness or the clown in his fun-fury. He wanted, like Shakespeare, to accept the world of men and women, accept all things in all moods, from loathing and disgust to exaltation and serenity. He wanted to reveal the beauty of life in life, to realize in his own work the principle that truth is beauty and beauty is truth. To a large extent Keats possessed Negative Capability. He achieved the ability to present a scene vividly, with concrete objectivity. He could make the scene embody thought and feeling.

**4.5.6. The Novelists:**

Of the different kinds of prose composition, the novel showed in this period the most marked development. This was largely due to the work of Scott and Jane Austen, who respectively established the historical and domestic types of novel. Scott raised the historical novel to the rank of one of the major kinds of literature. Miss Austen revealed the beauty and interest that underlie ordinary affairs; she displayed the infinite variety of common life. Other minor novelists were Maria Edgeworth, John Galt, William Harrison Ainsworth, George P.R. James, Frederick Marryat, Thomas Love Peacock and others.

**(a) Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832):**

Romanticism found a popular interpreter in Walter Scott. The movement for the revival of the past finds its finest expression in his poetry and fiction. He spent his childhood in his grandfather’s home at Sandy Knowe, in the Border country, where he learnt to love the wild and the rough landscape. His boyish imagination was stirred by the stories of Border battles in which his ancestors had taken part. He had a passionate interest in ancient ballads and collected many. He made many journeys into the highlands and gained a deep knowledge of the country and its people, which he later used in his novels. He published his collection of ballads in Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border (1802-1803). Out of this grew his first long poem The Lay of the Last Minstrel (1805), full of border incidents, fighting and enchantments. It was followed by other romances in verse, of which the most important are Marmion (1808), The Lady of the Lake (1810), and Rokeby (1813). Scott soon realized, specially by the popularity of Byron that his poetic inspiration was at an end and decided to give up verse-making. In spite of his many defects of diction and style, Scott is a powerful poet specially in describing scenes of battle and the Scottish landscape.

Scott had always been a story-teller in verse than a lyric poet. He now became a storyteller in prose. It was quite clear that the new medium suited him better than the old. About 1814 Scott largely gave up writing poetry and took to writing fiction, which was immense in output. Waverley, Guy Mannering, The Antiquary, The Black Dwarf, Old Mortality, Rob Roy, The Heart of Midlothian, The Bride of Lammermoor and A Legend of Montrose – all these novels deal with scenes in Scotland. Ivanhoe was set in England, The Monastery and The Abbot have Scotland again.

Other novels are Kenilworth, The Pirate, The Fortunes of Nigel, Peveril of the Peak, Quentin Durward, St. Ronan's Well, Red Gauntlet, The Betrothed and The Talisman. There were more novels as well as a mass of miscellaneous prose.

Scott's contribution to the novel, particularly the historical novel, is very great indeed. He has often been called the prose Shakespeare in several respects like handling of character and incident.

#### **(b) Jane Austen (1775-1817):**

Jane Austen is a direct literary descendant of Addison, Goldsmith, and Miss Burney, and an admirer of Cowper and Crabbe. She produced between 1796 and 1816, during the wars against the French Revolution and Napoleon, work that for calmness, delicacy, exquisite touch, and miniature grace has no rival in the whole of English literature. In the half-dozen novels she wrote, this daughter of a Hampshire rector set herself to study the ways of feminine affection, the delicacies and distresses of young and sensitive but not passionate hearts, their mistakes and their sorrows in first love. Her novels are Pride and Prejudice, Sense and Sensibility, Northanger Abbey, Emma, Mansfield Park and Persuasion. She portrayed with a lively though restrained sense of comedy, and with perfect exactness of touch, the various figures of the gentle folk of a country neighbourhood. She did not seek to instruct her readers; her aim was to draw a picture that would amuse them. Within the narrow limits which she set for herself, she achieved a finished realism, with qualities of the highest wit, elegance and incisive irony.

#### **4.5.7. Essayists:**

The reviews, periodicals and magazines of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries enriched the English essay. These encouraged writers like Leigh Hunt, Hazlitt, Lamb and De Quincey, who represented the new spirit of Romanticism in the English Essay.

**Charles Lamb** (1775-1834) has carved out an enviable niche in the genre of the English personal essay. His Essays of Elia appeared in the London Magazine under the name of Elia. The pen name gave Lamb absolute freedom to express himself freely – his follies, foibles and infirmities. It also provided him a chance to dissect his personality objectively and poke fun at it for the reader's pleasure. The autobiographical touch strikes the attention even of a casual reader. This does not mean that one can trace the history of Lamb's life in his essays, because his essays are a mixture of fact and fiction. In style Lamb is an Elizabethan as far as his diction, mode of thinking, and prejudices are concerned. The most remarkable feature of his style is the harmony between the matter and manner, the mood and expression. He quotes from his favourite authors in English and Latin. His humour is genuine and many-sided. It is the very stuff of his life. Charles Lamb founded no school and had no disciple in the narrow sense of the term but remains the most artistic exponent of the essay.

**William Hazlitt** (1778-1830), by temperament, is as much an essayist as Montaigne or Lamb. He stands revealed in his essays. He expresses his views and opinions firmly, and sticks to them obstinately. In this sense he is the very opposite of the gentle and sweet Lamb. He has been called 'a literary vagabond' because he loved to wander on the roads to watch the beauties of Nature. His love of Nature equals that of Wordsworth. Hazlitt was also a great literary critic. His English Comic Writers and The Spirit of the Age present a fine example of Romantic criticism.

**Leigh Hunt** (1784-1859), influenced by the Romantic spirit, wrote subjective or personal

essays, in which he establishes intimacy with his readers. He made Steele his model and there is much similarity between both, because both are sentimental. While Addison and Steele belonged almost wholly to London, Hunt was a man both of the town and the country and describes natural scenes with enthusiasm. In some of his essays he resembles Lamb.

**Thomas de Quincey** (1785-1859) divides literature into two branches: Literature of Knowledge, Literature of Power. He puts the essay under 'Literature of Knowledge'. He says that essays are papers which address themselves purely to the understanding as an insulated faculty. However, in his own essays he does not strictly follow the principle. He has written fine essays on Coleridge, Wordsworth, Lamb and Hazlitt. De Quincey is a writer of impassioned prose, such as was written by Sir Thomas Browne in the seventeenth century.

#### 4.5.8. Conclusion:

Thus the Romantic period in the history of English literature is really romantic, exuberant and vibrant. It has seen pinnacles in poetic imagination. This was indeed the golden age of the lyric. It comprised the exalted passion of Shelley, the meditative simplicity of Wordsworth, the sumptuous descriptions of Keats and the golden notes of Coleridge. The age was rich in descriptive and narrative poems as well as satirical poems.

Of the different kinds of prose composition, the novel showed in this period the most marked development. Scott and Jane Austen established the historical and domestic types of novel respectively. This period had seen literary criticism of great bulk and such generally high standard in the efforts of Hazlitt, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Lamb. A new wave has also started rising in lucid prose writing with the spurt of periodicals and magazines. The essay, exemplified in the works of Southey, Hazlitt, Lamb and Lockhart increased in length and solidity.

#### 4.5.9. Sample Questions:

1. What is Romanticism? What are its characteristic features?
2. What is Wordsworth's contribution to English poetry?
3. Discuss Keats as a poet of beauty and sensuousness?
4. How did the English essay develop in the Romantic Period?

#### 4.5.10. Reference Books:

1. A.C. Baugh. (ed) A Literary History of England.
2. C.M. Bowra. The Romantic Imagination
3. Graham Hough. The Romantic Poets.
4. W.H. Hudson. An Outline History of English Literature
5. Oxford Companion to English Literature.
6. Peter Westland. The Romantic Revival.

**Lesson – 4.6****THE AGE OF TENNYSON****4.6.1. Objective:**

The purpose of this lesson is to -

- (a) give a glimpse of the Victorian scene.
- (b) introduce great Victorian poets and novelists.
- (c) give a sketch of the Pre-Raphaelites and other poets.
- (d) trace the significance of the Oxford Movement.

**Structure:**

- 4.6.1 Objectives**
- 4.6.2 Introduction**
- 4.6.3 Victorian Poetry**
- 4.6.4. Alfred Tennyson**
- 4.6.5. Robert Browning**
- 4.6.6. Elizabeth Barrett Browning**
- 4.6.7. Edward Fitzgerald**
- 4.6.8. Matthew Arnold**
- 4.6.9. The Pre-Raphaelites**
  - (a) D.G. Rossetti**
  - (b) Christina Rossetti**
  - (c) William Morris**
  - (d) Algernon Charles Swinburne**
- 4.6.10. The Oxford Movement**
- 4.6.11. The Novelists**
  - (a) Dickens**
  - (b) Thackeray**
  - (c) Disraeli**
  - (d) Trollope**
  - (e) George Eliot**
  - (f) The Bronte Sisters**
  - (g) George Meredith**

(h) **Charles Reade**

(i) **Wilkie Collins**

(j) **R.L. Stevenson**

**4.6.12. Prose writers**

(a) **Thomas Carlyle**

(b) **John Ruskin**

(c) **Macaulay**

**4.6.13. Conclusion**

**4.6.14. Sample Questions**

**4.6.15. Reference Books**

## **4.6.2. Introduction:**

Tennyson occupies a prominent place in the history of English poetry in the second half of the nineteenth century. He is considered representative of his age, called the Victorian Age. The Age commenced roughly from passing the Reform Bill in 1832, and came to an end with the death of Queen Victoria in 1901. As a girl of eighteen, Victoria ascended the British throne in 1837, and the entire period of her reign came to be known as the Victorian era. This period saw many changes.

It was an age of discoveries and innovations. The spirit of scientific inquiry was predominant. Geological discoveries, biological investigations like the evolution of species, industrialization, and wider mobility of people led to the spread of scientific ideals and approach to life. The keynote of the new order was the call for rationality and utilitarianism. A desire for truth and realism as a means of idealism and expression was emphasized. The English society was imbued with a greater sense of discipline, self-respect, morality and dignity which came to be known as Victorian complacency.

From the beginning of the Victorian era, the Utilitarian Doctrine exercised its influence on public opinion, politics and national life. Utilitarianism was based on the theory that government should intervene as little as possible in the direction of economic affairs. It was the bounden duty of every individual to better his social status and aim at the top rung of the social ladder. The doctrine was found to be the effective philosophy of the society. Along with the progress of science, utilitarianism seemed to answer the needs of the majority of the people.

The two main tendencies of the Victorian Age are the realistic and scientific movement and the 'renaissance idealism'. Renaissance idealism exposed itself as an offshoot of Romanticism, diversified as in the doctrine of Thomas Carlyle, the sentimental art of Charles Dickens, the religious revival of Oxford, and the aesthetic and social crusade of John Ruskin. The idealism of Carlyle and his disciples is a transparent variety of "Romantic Mysticism." Carlyle is the antagonist of the Victorian Age, which is bound by the Germanic school of thought comprising J.P. Richter, Goethe and others. Carlyle preaches that all human transformation springs from within. He wishes the persons of industry and aristocracy to rise high in spiritual dignity and work for the future of mankind.

### 4.6.3. Victorian Poetry:

Victorian poetry is notable for its unusual achievements. The Age has not produced any major poet of unquestionable greatness. It produced a number of technically accomplished poets who look major but remain essentially minor. According to a critic, Victorian poetry is not the result of pressures within the minds of the individual poets, but had its origin in general impressions and aims. Much Victorian poetry depends for its effect on impressiveness of manner and tone, and expresses a melancholy which appears general rather than individual.

Victorian poetry is indebted to the Movement, the vocabulary, the excitement and the attitudes of Romantic poetry. The assimilation of the Romantic qualities, specially its pastoralism and mediaevalism may be ascribed to the influence of Tennyson and the tastes of the middle-class reading public.

### 4.6.4. Alfred Tennyson (1809 – 1892):

Alfred Tennyson was the most representative and the most popular poet of Victorian England. His two elder brothers, Frederic and Charles, were also poets. They were all men of singular physical beauty and strength. Tennyson's genius struck its roots deep into the soil of family affection and love of country. The earlier Romantic poets – Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron and Shelley – inspired and influenced him a lot. Tennyson was always in closer sympathy with the sentiments of the English middle classes.

In 1828 Tennyson went to Trinity College, Cambridge, and left it in 1831. The group of friends who gathered round Tennyson included Arthur Henry Hallam, James Spedding, Richard Trench, Henry Alfred and others. They were imbued with the serious and practical temper of the merchant class which was to reshape England during the next fifty years. His friendship with Arthur Hallam was one of the most precious things to him during these years. The news of Hallam's death came to Tennyson in September 1833. Tennyson seemed stunned by the shock. As an outlet for his grief, he began writing In Memoriam. Starting as an elegy for his friend, the work soon became a long philosophic poem dealing with universal questions of life, death, and the hereafter. Tennyson's friendship with Fitzgerald and Carlyle helped him in sharpening his poetic talent. Revising much of his earlier work, Tennyson published his poems in two volumes in 1842 which brought him reputation and established him as a poet. In 1850 Tennyson got married, published In Memoriam and on Wordsworth's death, accepted the Laureateship. Everything that Tennyson now wrote commanded respect and worldly honours poured in steadily upon him. Some of his notable poems are 'The Lady of Shalott', 'The Lotos - Eaters', 'The Palace of Art', 'Morte d' Arthur', 'Ulysses', and 'Locksley Hall'.

Tennyson wrote poetry like a scientist with a marked aptitude for poetry. He would revise and revise a stanza to rectify the least ambiguity of statement. This scientific perception is the source alike of his strength and weakness as a poet. Social problems had begun to stir Tennyson in 1840s. In 1847 he published his first long poem, The Princess, which deals with a problem of the day, the "woman question." This poem shows a fine command of blank verse, and contains passages of great beauty. Yet the most attractive element of the poem lay in Tennyson's afterthought of inserting songs between the various parts. Meanwhile Tennyson had been working on "memorial poems". In 1850 he wrote "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington" and in 1855 came Maud and Other Poems. But these are inferior to In Memoriam, a work of seventeen years. In Idylls of the King (1859, 1869, 1889) Tennyson treated of the Arthurian legend in four



episodes. Technically, the Idylls are a great achievement described as an allegory of the soul of man. Tennyson's blank verse is finer in quality than any attempted by the poets of the Romantic Revival. His Enoch Arden (1864) became the most popular of his long poems. Tennyson produced plays in his later years. He wrote three historical plays Queen Mary (1875), Harold (1876), and Becket (1884). Other plays are The Falcon (1879), The Cup (1881) and The Foresters (1892).

Tennyson's verse has a grace, a flexibility, a notable cadence, and a delicate and caressing tenderness. He is at his happiest and best when actualizing for us the beauty of the visible world. Here his clarity, melody and dignity exhibited in their amplest power. He clads the stark fact in lovely imagery. Thus, Tennyson's landscapes are never vague. He never paints Nature. Nature for him is always a background for reflecting some human emotion. Tennyson's attitude towards men and women is that of quiet, deliberate, steady, self-restrained nature and averse from tidal impulses and the insurgent aspects of human life. He deals with princes, princesses, men and women of intellectual power and delicate refinement. He is drawn to an environment of culture and good lineage. King Arthur is his ideal of manhood, strong, calm and self-contained, while the women he loves best are gentle, patient and enduring souls. When he touches the lives of the poor, he is gracious, kind and gently patronizing. He deals with types rather than individuals.

Tennyson's influence on national politics was a wholesome and tonic one. He helped to foster the feeling that love of country should animate people by dwelling on the finer qualities of national character and insisting on the value of ancient forms and traditions. Tennyson experienced some religious problems. His attitude is an attitude of compromise. He proposes a via media between the materialistic science of his day and dogmatic Christianity. The philosophy of In Memoriam sums up Tennyson's religious position: "somehow good will be the final goal of ill". Law and order are for him rules of conduct: disorder is the antithesis of rational existence. He saw it disturbing the life around him, and loathed it.

As a word-painter of typical English scenery and as the exponent of the simple emotions of everyday life, Tennyson holds a treasured and honourable place. His delicacy and crystalline charm, his dignified and melodious utterance will always endear him to English men and women.

#### **4.6.5. Robert Browning (1812- 1889):**

Browning's real education took place at home. His father had a good library and his mother was religious and loved music. Browning started writing poetry when he was twelve. He wrote a small book of verse, but failing to find a publisher, burnt them. He was influenced by the poetry of Byron, Shelley and Keats. Their influence can be clearly seen in his first poem Pauline, written when he was nineteen. It was so savagely reviewed by critic John Stuart Mill that Browning was deeply humiliated and he resolved to avoid the subjective style of Shelley thereafter. From 1836 to 1846 he was a playwright and wrote eight plays. Some of Browning's plays are Strafford (1837), Sordello (1840), Pippa Passes (1841), King Victor and King Charles (1842) etc. His plays failed because they lacked action. He was not a dramatist, but a dramatic philosopher. In writing dramas, Browning discovered his talent for creating dramatic monologues. Some of his best works are Dramatic Lyrics (1842), Dramatic Romances and Lyrics (1845), Men and Women (1855), Dramatis Personae (1864) and The Ring and the Book (1868-69).

Browning met Elizabeth Barrett, an invalid and an established poet, who was six years his senior on 20 May, 1845 and soon got married. The couple moved to Italy where they lived happily until her death in 1861. Browning shortly afterwards returned to London with his only son. Browning

did not enjoy poetic acclaim in the beginning of his career. Both critics and the public found his poems dense and difficult. Before his wife's death in 1861, he was often referred to slightly as "Mrs. Browning's husband." Recognition came late, but generously. Browning continued to publish his books. Browning's development as a writer may be divided into four periods:

- a) From 1832 to 1846 is the experimental period. He is seeking for his true medium as an artist. He tries various forms, then finds in the dramatic lyric his most satisfying expression.
- b) From 1846 to 1869, is the period of his best and most varied work. Sometimes the intellectual side dominates, sometimes the emotional. He is at his happiest when they blend, and at the close of the period we have the noblest blend in The Ring and the Book.
- c) From 1869 to 1876, the intellectual side of Browning gets the upper hand. The period is rich in caustic and dialectic verse, but is lacking in imaginative beauty. We admire Browning the thinker and lament the decline of the artist.
- d) From 1870 to 1889, once again the artist in Browning awakens to delight us with some measure of the old magic.

Browning's interests were wide and varied, but primarily he was a poet of Man. He brooded over the soul's expressions and attempted to project those in his poetry. He had great love of nature and his descriptions of Nature have an essentially Italian inspiration. He has a special predilection for sunrise and sunset, and the advent of spring. His philosophy of life is characterized by robust optimism. His is a philosophy of strenuous endeavour; true joy lies in effort, not in success. Faith in God, faith in the immortality of the Soul, faith in earnest endeavour are the cardinal points of Browning's philosophy of human life. Poetry, painting and music were the arts which specially attracted him and he found certain qualities common to them all. Religion also finds a prominent place in his poetry.

The most characteristic and the most original work of Browning is to be found in his love poems. The most remarkable thing about them is their complete independence of convention and variety. He was a dramatic poet. He insisted on giving all points of view.

**Dramatic Monologue:** The dramatic monologue is essentially dramatic. It is the utterance of an imaginary character. In it the character is developed not through any description but through conflict between the opposite thoughts and emotions of the character. It is a 'monologue' because it is a conversation of a single individual with himself. 'Mono' means 'one' and 'logue' means 'conversation'. The form is also referred to as 'monodrama'.

The dramatic monologue is different from the soliloquy. In the soliloquy we find the character at a critical moment talking to himself and within himself. The dramatic monologue, too, has a speaker. He talks to a real or imaginary audience. The monologue expresses a conflict of thought, a conflict between a desire and an external situation, or a conflict between man's view and God's view. The conflict would be a kind of monodrama.

In the dramatic monologue Browning found a medium where both his lyrical and dramatic genius could work together. His main idea and aim was to throw light upon the realm of consciousness by means of the method of psychological analysis which can finally reveal the individual expression. The dramatic monologue was used by Browning with amazing skill and success. As Hugh Walker points out, "Browning did not invent the dramatic monologue, but he made it specially his own, and no one else has ever put up such rich and varied material into it."

#### 4.6.6. Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806 – 1861):

Elizabeth Barrett's An Essay on Mind and Other Poems (1826) bears the stamp of Pope in its title, not in its contents. In 1833 she translated Aeschylus's Prometheus Bound. The Seraphim and other Poems appeared in 1838 and two volumes of Poems followed in 1844. Then Robert Browning came into her life. The influence of her love is felt at once in the forty-four sonnets fancifully called "Sonnets from the Portuguese" first printed in Poems (1850). They remain the most generally profitable part of her large production. Her most ambitious and most original work Aurora Leigh was published in 1857. Much about the passions and aspirations of the Victorian women can be found in the poem's eleven thousand lines. Her Casca Guidi Windows (1851) and Poems before Congress (1860) are entirely Italian and political in theme. The posthumous Last Poems (1862) are remarkable in her poetic career. For many years and for many people the poet Browning meant Elizabeth, not Robert. When Wordsworth died in 1850, the Athenaeum suggested her name as Poet Laureate.

#### 4.6.7. Edward Fitzgerald (1809-1883):

Edward Fitzgerald was of Irish stock. On leaving Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1830, after a period of four years he resided with his parents for eight years. Later he lived the life of a recluse with his books and garden in a small cottage on his father's estate. In 1853 he changed his mode of living.

Fitzgerald's first work Euphranor was published anonymously in 1851, and a year later Polonius: a Collection of Wise Saws and Sayings. When visiting Bodleian Library in 1856 he became attracted by the works of Omar Khayyam. He at once set to work on a translation of the Persian poetry and published anonymously in 1859. Fitzgerald was also a charming letter writer. Fitzgerald made no attempt at literal translation, omitting and adding with a freedom. In dealing with Sophocles and Aeschylus, he followed the same method. But he is not so successful here in preserving the spirit of the original. In his translation of The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam (1859), he is supremely successful. Fitzgerald's translation has the force and beauty of an original work. The Rubaiyat is like some rich mosaic constructed out of diverse patterns.

#### 4.6.8. Matthew Arnold (1822 - 1888):

Arnold holds a place of distinction among the representative writers of the Victorian Age. His poetical work is smaller in volume. It reflects some significant tendencies of nineteenth century thought. In 1849 he published his first volume, The Strayed Reveller and Other Poems. Empedocles on Etna came in 1852. The 1853 volume included many of the poems already printed, together with others which are shining examples of his more elaborate and considered work, such as "Sohrab and Rustum" and "The Scholar Gypsy." In 1855 appeared his Second Series of poems, Merope in 1859 and the New Poems in 1867. In 1857 he was elected Professor of Poetry at Oxford.

Arnold was also a prose-writer like Carlyle or Ruskin. Most of his work was in opposition to their preaching. Carlyle desired to strengthen in his countrymen Anglo-Saxon and Germanic virtues while Ruskin approved of the Middle Ages and turned his countrymen away from the Renaissance and the characteristic beauty of classical antiquity. But, according to Arnold, it was exactly the classical qualities that the Englishman has need of in order to attain harmonious perfection in morals and in literature. He wanted to propagate the classical spirit in his country in

all his prose-works: On Translating Homer (1861), The Study of Celtic Literature (1867), Essays in Criticism (1865 & 1888), and Culture and Anarchy (1969). Arnold was not content with a purely literary and intellectual culture. He was also a religious man and attempted to eliminate the dogmatic element from Christianity to allow it to be in line with the conquests of science and the progress of liberal thought.

Arnold believed that poetry is a criticism of life. His best poetry is conceived as a battle with worldliness and growing conflict between science and religion. He is the greatest elegiac poet of the age. The elegiac temper of Arnold is the ruling passion of his life and poetry. His writings are characterized by three persisting qualities: Suavity, Wistfulness, and Serenity.

Other minor poets were John Clare, Ebenezer Elliott, Thomas Hood, Henry Taylor, Charles Tennyson Turner, James Thomson and Arthur Hugh Clough.

#### 4.6.9. The Pre- Raphaelites:

In 1848 D.G. Rossetti and his painter friends, drawn together by similar aspirations, formed the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Their idea was to revive the art of painting, as it existed among the Italian painters before Raphael (1483 – 1520). The young men would paint what they saw. They rejected the various established principles of technique. They were more devoted to religious, medieval and romantic themes. In different ways Rossetti, his sister Christina, Morris and Swinburne had been affected by the Romantic spirit and felt more sympathy for Coleridge and Keats. They were in revolt against their age. They revolted against the industrial world. They were poets of escape into the happy world of daydreams and exalted fancy. Their different imaginary worlds were built from old art and literature. Thus they lacked the vigour which comes from direct contact with the living scene. The pre-Raphaelites believed in the world beyond and tried to find out what it was, how it manifested itself, and how it could be reduced to a coherent plan. They established relationship between the soul and the body and saw the soul in the body.

**(a) D.G. Rossetti (1828 - 1882):** Rossetti, the founder of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was both painter and poet. He was influenced by Coleridge, Keats and the Italy of the Middle Ages. He turned his back on the religious and social problems. Love and Beauty to him were all in all. His love remained individual and earthly, the love of a man for 'one loveliest woman's form and face.'

Rossetti's poetry possesses all the qualities of his painting. His first remarkable poem The Blessed Damsel shows the clear painting of details. Rossetti builds up in poetry what he sees with a painter's eye. His early poems are in the manner of Keats. A Last Confession and Jenny are dramatic monologues very much in Browning's manner. His other narrative poems are all medieval in setting or tone. One medieval form, the ballad, attracted him particularly. Rossetti's cult of Love and Beauty finds its fullest expression in the sonnet sequence called The House of Life.

**(b) Christina Rossetti (1830 – 1894) :** Christina Rossetti belongs to the Romantic tradition. Her poetry pulsates with passion. She is interested in religion and moral thoughts. She meditates on the mystery of death in many poems. She has experienced every passion. Like her brother, D.G. Rossetti, she is conscious of form and technique, and uses words with felicity and metre with skill. Her vigour and spontaneity find in the lyric the finest expression of her sincere feelings. Her principal works are Goblin Market and Other Poems (1862), The Prince's Progress (1866), A Pageant and Other Poems (1881), Verses (1893), New Poems, published posthumously in 1896, and Sing-Song, a book of verse for children.

Yet with all her intense and religious feeling, there is nothing of the preacher or teacher in her. She does not seek to justify the ways of god to man. She impresses us with her gift of actualising the naturalism of the supernatural world that she believes and worships. Her entire attitude is that of a worshipper. Critics have noted the ascetic passion of her verse. Her asceticism is not that of the bloodless soul in which both love and living are withered. It has all the capacity for enjoying the sensuous delights of life, yet has deliberately put them aside and turned her eyes skywards, from choice.

**(c) William Morris (1834 – 1896):** The true disciple of Rossetti is not his sister, but William Morris, who started his career as an architect fond of Gothic style. By Rossetti's advice he turned from architecture to painting, then he took up handicraft and revolutionized the whole art of house furnishing in England.

Morris had written several poems and collected them in a volume, The Defence of Guenevere (1858). It is medieval in subject and pre-Raphaelite in technique. Morris wrote of the Middle Ages, their romantic dreams and brutal realities as he found them in the pages of Malory and Frissart. Much of his best literary work made its first appearance in The Commonweal, the organ of the Socialist League. His other long narrative poems are The Life and Death of Jason (1867), The Earthly Paradise (1970) and The Story of Sigurd, the Volsung (1876). His next work of a big scale was a translation of the Odyssey, a vigorous and admirable piece of work. Certainly Morris was spiritually more akin to Homer.

**(d) Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837 - 1909) :** Swinburne was educated at Eton and Oxford. At Oxford he met D.G. Rossetti and William Morris, and became their admirer. Under the influence of Morris's Defence of Guenevere, he wrote a number of poems in the pre-Raphaelite manner. Later he was interested in Greek and Elizabethan drama, and his diction shows the influence of the Bible. He attained fame by the publication of Atalanta in Calydon (1865), a drama in the classical Greek form. The Queen Mother and Rosamond were Swinburne's noteworthy plays. In the same year appeared Chastelard, the first of his three romantic plays on Mary, Queen of Scots. He wrote his second play on Mary Queen of Scots, Bothwell (1874) and the third play Mary Stuart in 1881. The Duke of Gandia (1908) was his last work. In 1866 he published Poems and Ballads. He became interested in the freedom of Italy and wrote A Song of Italy (1867) and Songs before Sunrise (1871).

Swinburne's broad interests in the problems of Italy's freedom took him out of the ivory tower which the Pre-Raphaelites had built for themselves. Like Shelley, he was a fighter for lost causes. His poetry is the sweet swan-song of the Pre-Raphaelite movement. His love of beauty leads directly to the Aesthetic Movement of the nineties.

#### 4.6.10. The Oxford Movement:

With the unprecedented growth of science in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a growing demand that religion should be put to the test of rational scientific examination. There grew religious unrest at Oxford. The Oxford Movement, which is also known as the Tractarian Movement, was fundamentally religious in nature. It was not a political movement. It opposed liberalism in all its aspects. The Movement's aims are to rehabilitate the dignity of the Church, to defend the Church against the interference of the State, to fight against liberalism, to restore reverence for the sacraments, rituals and dogmas of the Roman Catholic faith. The Oxford Movement was allied with the Romantic Movement and derived much inspiration from the Middle Ages. In the words of Prof. Gates, "The Oxford Movement was in its essence an attempt to reconstruct the English

Church in harmony with the Romantic ideal." The Movement owed much to Coleridge and Scott who turned men's minds in the direction of the Middle Ages. The originator of the Movement was John Keble, who was a Professor of Poetry at Oxford. He was the Movement's "true and primary author."

**John Henry Newman (1801 – 1890):** Newman was highly imaginative. He thought little of poetry as an art. His poetical output is slight and belongs chiefly to his earlier years. But the quality is high, and there is distinction and power in all that he wrote. His most considerable poem, The Dream of Gerontius, was written many years before its publication in 1865. His blank verse is forceful and impressive. The entire poem exhibits sensitive mysticism with a bolder range of imagination. John Henry Newman was the soul and spirit behind the Oxford Movement. He began as a Protestant and ended as a Roman Catholic. After his return from the Continent in 1832, he joined the movement and soon became its chief pilot. He wrote many of the tracts and his one famous tract XC provoked criticism. In 1845 he converted to Roman Catholic faith. His Apologia Pro Vita Sua is a kind of spiritual autobiography. His other works worth mention are Essay of Development of Christian Doctrine, The Idea of a University Defined and his two novels Loss and Gain and Callista. He is also remembered for his famous poem "Lead Kindly Light".

Richard Hurrell Froude is chiefly known for his Remains and two of the Tracts for the Time and a few poems. He was a link between Keble and Newman. Edward Pusey was also one of the protagonists of the Movement. The few more names connected with the Oxford Movement are those of W.G. Ward, the writer of Idea of a Christian Church, R.W. Church, the man who wrote the objective history of the Oxford Movement, Cardinal Wiseman, and Cardinal Manning.

The Oxford Movement had great influence on the literary taste of its age. It inspired the poetry of the Pre-Raphaelite school and religious writers like Hopkins.

#### 4.6.11. The Novelists:

##### (a) Charles Dickens (1812-1870) :

The Victorian Age with all its characteristics is reflected very skilfully in the work of its most representative novelist, Charles Dickens. He could not have proper school education because of poverty and experienced hardships at eleven years of age when he went to work in blacking factory. Dickens got his first literary enthusiasm from an intense and excited reading in childhood of the great classics of fiction, original or translated. So he was early prepared to write. He had the observing eye and the experiencing nature. His travels as a reporter for several papers made him familiar with places and people. From the very beginning he was himself and continued to be himself to the end.

Dickens' earliest writings are sketches. His first sketch "A Dinner at Popular Walk" retitled "Mr Thinns and his Cousin" was published in 1833. After that he wrote numerous tales and sketches. In less than two years he had enough material to make two volumes, Sketches by Boz (1835, 1836). His best-known work The Pickwick Papers was published serially in 1836-1837. There is no book like Pickwick Papers anywhere. It like a fairy tale. It is a vast and vigorous world, with its three hundred characters and twenty-two inns. It is one of the miracles of art. It is full of vitality and merriment. It bubbles over with a kind of humour. The immense success of The Pickwick Papers brought Dickens fame and fortune. He would now write just what he liked. The humourist in him vanished. In Oliver Twist (1837-1838) and Nicholas Nickleby (1838-39) he took the role of a crusader with wrongs to set right, the journalist with evils to expose, the philanthropist

with causes to proclaim, and the melodramatist with villains to denounce. The inset tales of Master Humphrey's Clock (1840-41) go back to the level of old Sketches.

In 1842 Dickens was invited to visit the United States and Canada. He was received as the guest of the nation and treated with every mark of honour and appreciation. The visit exercised great influence on his work. He produced American Notes (1842) and Martin Chuzzlewit (1843-44). These two books struck a false note, and Dickens began to lose something of his great popularity because of his remarks on slavery and the American way of life.

In 1843 the famous A Christmas Carol began the series of Christmas books which appeared annually until 1848. They are wonderful fables. What Dickens did in the fine Christmas stories was to indulge in some moral stock-taking at the traditional season of goodwill. He claimed that it was the right of all to enjoy themselves in their own way. Dombey and Son appeared in parts during 1847-48. It marks a change in manner, for it is Dickens's first attempt at painting actual modern society. In the meanwhile he undertook editing for All the Year Round and carried it on till his death. David Copperfield came in monthly form (1849-1850). It is written with a curious tenderness. It is Dickens's most varied, most serious and most firmly sustained effort. It is the sweetest of all his stories. Bleak House came out in 1853. He began to give dramatic readings from his own works. As he was already the most popular writer, these readings were very successful. Crowds thronged to hear him. Money poured into his pockets from his novels and from his readings. Dickens continued to work hard and published Hard Times (1854), Little Dorrit (1857), A Tale of Two Cities (1859), Great Expectations (1861) and Our Mutual Friend (1865). In addition there were three volumes of A Child's History of England (1852-54).

Dickens was a great storyteller. He could moralise while he made readers laugh. His humour is at its best when it is mingled with pathos. He identified himself with the public. His sympathetic soul made all their joys and griefs his own. He fought against injustice, championed the weak against the strong, gave courage to the faint, and hope to the weary in heart. His plots are invariably 'the intrigue of action', which fills the whole novel. His characters are realistic.

#### **(b) William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863) :**

Thackeray was born in Calcutta in 1811 where his father held an important position under the East India Company. His father died in 1815. His mother soon remarried and he was sent to England. In 1829 he was in Cambridge where he grouped with Alfred Tennyson, Edward Fitzgerald and Milnes. Thackeray wrote caricatures and verses which afterwards appeared in the University journals.

Thackeray purchased a newspaper, the National Standard, that floated less than five months. Later he took up a radical newspaper named Constitutional which gradually collapsed. He started writing and drawing in various papers and magazines using pseudonyms – Michael Angelo Titmarsh and George Savage Fitz-Boodle. Thackeray's literary output is a long list but he is famous for Vanity Fair (1847-48), for which he used his own name, Pendennis (1848-50) and Esmond (1855). Much of the work that Thackeray had produced during the ten years preceding Vanity Fair was purely fugitive. But he had acquired practice in style.

Thackeray first found himself as a writer in The Book of Snobs (1846). The weakness and strength of his long-sustained satire against the social foibles of his time are revealed in that book. Other writers had dealt with it before Thackeray, but Thackeray quietly mocked. As a matter of fact, snobbery became a literary obsession with Thackeray and he read it into everything and

into almost everyone. Thackeray was no cynic, though he has often been termed one. His bitterness is often merely a cloak to hide his sensitiveness. His own life was clouded by tragedy and he is intensely susceptible to the sinister elements in other human lives. He satirized social conventions. He lashed at pretence and snobbery. He was never a "crusader" and propounded no problems. He kept closely to the world he knew. He saw that in life it is hard to draw a clear line between vice and virtue.

Thackeray did good and memorable work in restoring to English fiction a sober actuality and true representation of the human society than it had received since the time of Fielding. He did the same service for English fiction as Ben Jonson did for English drama. He was at his best a great artist, a great stylist, and an admirable painter of manners.

### (c) Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881):

Disraeli is one of the brilliant and forceful personalities of mid-Victorian times. He was born a Jew, though baptized in childhood. He was never at a public school or university. The earliest education he received was that which he found for himself in his father's library. He made a remarkable attack on the new industrialism with its accompanying poverty. He was a powerful upholder of the new Tory Democracy.

Disraeli's earliest novel, Vivian Grey (1826), contains some good sketches of character and some brilliant sallies of wit. The Young Duke (1830) embodies some pungent political criticism. Alroy (1833) and The Rise of Iskander (1835) are historical. Henrietta Temple, which rightly calls itself "A Love Story", and Venetia (both 1837), have nothing to do with political or social problems. He becomes a new person with what is called his "young England" trilogy, Coningsby (1844), Sybil (1845), and Tancred (1847). These books show Disraeli's genius for depicting the conflict of great ideas. Few writers have excelled him in depicting brilliantly attractive young men and women. His last two novels, Lothair (1870) and Endymion (1880), are full of politics. Lothair exhibits Disraeli's strong interest in religion, and Endymion depicts the rise and success of a great political adventure, with Louis Napoleon as model.

Disraeli's brilliant pictures of contemporary life and manners have enduring interest. He has blended his social wit, politics, race, religion and romance in his work. He mingled western romance with 'Asian Mystery'. It lent itself to parody. His novels were regarded by some nineteenth century critics as a joke. The joke has outlasted the critics. What he might have written had he not entered parliament in 1837 and fought his way through the warfare of politics till he became Prime Minister in 1868 is a matter for speculation.

### (d) Anthony Trollope (1815-1882):

Anthony received an irregular kind of education. The experiences of his boyhood stiffened the doggedness of his nature. He entered the service of the post office and earned steady promotions. At the same time he took to novel writing to increase his income. He wrote about sixty novels. His first real success came with The Warden (1855). His later novels Barchester Towers (1857), Dr. Thorne (1858), Framley Parsonage (1861), The Small House at Allington (1864) and The Last Chronicles of Barset (1867) made him popular. In these we get a perfect picture of English provincial life, with the middle or upper middle classes as its main figures.

Most of Trollope's novels are competent. He is an excellent painter of character. He is at his best in depicting the genial worldling type. Trollope is happiest in delineating those scenes and characters which exhibit especially Saxon qualities. No one can sketch more faithfully and



sympathetically the English middle class matron as he does. His foremost concern is with people. The people in his books come to our notice in the natural fashion of acquaintanceship, hardening or mellowing with time. As a story teller Trollope is mechanical rather than inventive. He wrote for income and to satisfy his urge of writing. Consequently his plots are often contrived rather than inspired. His popularity was checked for a time by his delightfully frank Autobiography (1883) in which he spoke of literary work as something that could be done regularly by the clock. He wrote three hours a day. Trollope warmly approved Dr. Johnson's blunt saying that no one but a fool would write except for money.

Trollope's plots are satisfactory, his texture mainly good homespun and his literary aims un-ambitious. The very ordinariness of his level has been his strength, for he kept up to his level. He is a thorough representative English novelist and the social historian of a period.

### **(e) George Eliot (1819-81):**

Mary Ann Evans was born in a traditional religious family. Her father Robert Evans was a well-seasoned Tory with the firm belief that anyone with the revolutionary strain in his blood was a scoundrel of the deepest dye. At first, she accepted with docility her father's views. She never ceased to read and study, and her acquirements became both deep and extensive. In the early forties she came under the influence of Charles Bray, author of The Philosophy of Necessity (1841). The acquaintanceship proved a crisis in her intellectual life. Charles Hennell's book An Inquiry Concerning the Origin of Christianity (1838) made a deep impression on her. This book affected her attitude towards her father's rigid Puritanism. She gave up church-going. After her father's death she settled in London and became assistant editor of the Westminster Review. From that time she became a figure in advanced circles. Evans was introduced to George Henry Lewes, a man of considerable gifts. Attracted by his extraordinary intellectual vivacity and quickness of sympathy, she made an unofficial "marriage" with him. The union proved in many ways not only a happy one but a fortunate one in determining Evan's literary career. This spiritual or intellectual marriage transformed Mary Ann Evans into George Eliot, a name chosen almost at random.

The impulse to write a story came to George Eliot, not from sudden kindling of the creative imagination, but from the suggestion of her friend Lewes. Her Scenes of Clerical Life appeared in 1858. Thackeray and Dickens were warm in their admiration of Eliot's novel. The appearance of Adam Bede in 1859 satisfied the high expectations of readers and critics. With the creative spirit still strong in her, George Eliot began The Mill on the Floss (1860) into which she poured most abundantly the experiences of her own early life. The novel is rich in character and description. The tenderness of fancy, humour and the strong simplicity of invention make her next novel Silas Marner (1861) a perfect story. Romola was published in 1863. The historical reconstruction of Medicean Florence is magnificently arranged in this novel. Her next novel Felix Holt, the Radical (1866), was based partly on the life of the Christian Socialist poet Gerald Massey and is the only political story she attempted. It contains some admirable things such as the preliminary sketch of rural England into which the railways were first beginning to penetrate. With Middlemarch, a Study of Provincial Life (1871-72), George Eliot happily returned to her first and best manner – the relation of domestic tragedy and comedy set in the English scene. In amplitude of scene, character and humour, Middlemarch is as great as any novel in English language. John Buchan called it "the greatest novel of the Victorian Age." Daniel Deronda (1876) was the last of George Eliot's novels.

George Eliot attempted no more fiction. She felt that the labour of long creative work was beyond her, and the death of Lewes in 1878 removed her watchful adviser. Some two years later she married a young London banker and an old devoted friend, John Walter Cross, about twenty years her junior. Shortly after her marriage her health failed, and in December 1880 she died suddenly after a short illness.

George Eliot is often oppressive when she speaks in her own person; but she quickens miraculously into life when she speaks through her characters. She was the first novelist to lay the stress wholly upon character rather than upon incident; to make her stories spiritual rather than physical dramas. She depicted characters with force and insight. Even though she wrote some poetry, she was not in essence a poet. Her fame rests upon her novels; and her place in English fiction is secure.

#### **(f) The Bronte Sisters:**

The Bronte Sisters are Charlotte (1816-55), Emily (1818-48) and Anne (1820-49). The three sisters composed a few poems and published them in a volume in 1845. The volume was not successful. Charlotte then embodied some of her experiences in a novel, The Professor, which was rejected but was finally published after her death in 1857. She had to learn her technique, especially the transcendental technique which converts a recital of facts into a creation with a life of its own. In Jane Eyre (1847) Charlotte found herself. She chose a story of unhappy experience and troubled love for this novel. Jane Eyre is a unique Victorian book because in its purity becomes passionate and outspoken. Gone is the "man's woman"; here is woman herself, confronting man on equal terms. In a sense Jane Eyre is the first modern novel about the life of a plain, ordinary woman with romance.

The other sisters were also writing. Emily's novel Wuthering Heights and Anne's Agnes Grey appeared in 1847. Some critics declared that Wuthering Heights was equal to King Lear while some other critics were of the opinion that it was full of wasteful and ridiculous excess. The book is unique. There was nothing like it before. There is the combination of high imagination with pure ignorance. In 1848 Anne's second novel, The Tenant of Wildfell was published. The novel showed signs of undeveloped strength and fine observation. But time and experience were denied her. In May 1849 Anne died because of ill-health. A few months later Emily collapsed and died.

Charlotte finished her novel Shirley in utter bereavement of her sisters. Shirley is not easy to read. Her next novel Villette came after a serious ill-health in 1853. Villette is brilliant and a work of genius. It does not entirely escape the defects of a personal record. It was the last of Charlotte's books. She had married her father's curate Nicholls in 1854 on June 29, and died in her husband's arms on March 31, 1855.

Charlotte Bronte has written of lonely, repressed womanhood with a passion and intensity unsurpassed in English fiction. Until she began to write, no woman had ever dared to write of life from the woman's point of view. She revealed woman as a human being. The agonies of a woman yearning for affection are exhibited especially in Jane Eyre and Villette. Charlotte had the soul of the primitive woman. She goes down to posterity as a type of the plain, sensitive woman hungering for love. She revolted against the accepted convention of the heroines in fiction. She revolted against the convention of the woman's place in the routine of life, the formalism and hypocrisy, the harshness and cruelty that she saw around her. Charlotte Bronte's reputation rests on her three books: Jane Eyre, Shirley and Villette.

**(g) George Meredith (1828-1909):**

Though George Meredith was completely Victorian in birth and upbringing, he represented a rejection of the normal Victorian values in faith and life. He was to become a solicitor but drifted towards literature. His first volume Poems (1851), contained pieces of high promise and actual merit. His first prose works, The Shaving of Shagpat (1856), and Farind (1857), are remarkable showing his extraordinary power of fantastic invention. During the fifties and early sixties he was also contributing articles to the Morning Post. "I detest the writing for money," he said. "Journalism for money is Egyptian bondage," he further said.

Meredith's novels The Ordeal of Richard Feverel (1859), Evan Harrington (1861), Emilia in England (1864) – the title was changed to Sandra Belloni in 1887 – and The Adventures of Harry Richmond (1871), all deal with the upbringing of well-born youth to the state of "capable manhood". With the publication of The Egoist (1879) came fame. The forceful literary organ, the Athenaeum generously praised The Egoist as "a piece of imaginative work as solid and rich as anything that the century has seen – one of the strongest and most original productions of modern literature". The four novels – Diana of the Crossways (1885), One of Our Conquerors (1891), Lord Ormont and his Aminta (1894) and The Amazing Marriage (1895) have in common a chivalrous advocacy of women compromised in honour and in pride by male despotism. With his women characters he removed the conventional rose-pink that early Victorian writers used particularly to cloak womanhood in. What Fielding did for men, George Meredith did for women, drawing them frankly and sincerely from the life and not from the conventions.

Throughout his career, from the publication of his first poem, "Chillianwallah", in Chamber's Journal (1849), Meredith continued the writing of verse. In 1862 appeared Modern Love, the poet's tragic masterpiece. It is a series of fifty sonnets each containing four quatrains. The volumes called Poems and Lyrics of the Joy of Earth (1883), A Reading of Earth (1888) and A Reading of Life (1901) stand high in the tradition of Victorian metaphysical poetry. Meredith was a great metrical experimenter. He has devised some wonderful stanza forms.

The society Meredith depicts is almost feudal in its caste feeling; the attitude to the wonderfully attractive women depicted is almost medieval. In all his work Meredith remained fanatically true to his own ideals of matter and expression. He did not bother about popular approval but gave the world his best. His artistic sincerity, integrity and courage are inspiring. He was a stimulating novelist and had a spiritual and tonic influence in English life.

**(h) Charles Reade (1814-1884):**

Reade graduated at Oxford. He began to write fairly late in life. He was always a fighter. He took up causes and attacked abuses. He made almost every novel a document. He turned novels into plays and plays into novels. His first novel Peg Woffington (1853) was made from his play Masks and Faces (1852), Christie Johnston (1853), his most idyllic story, delineates life in a Scottish fishing village. Reade was deeply in sympathy with the impulse towards realism which was at work in fiction in the middle of the century. His documentary novels are not all of one kind. There are, first, those in which he makes use of his knowledge of trades and occupations; such are The Autobiography of a Thief (1858), Jack of all Trades (1858) and A Hero and a Martyr (1874). Secondly, there are stories of philanthropic purpose. The ghastly cranks and collars and jackets of It is Never too Late of Mend (1856) were things he had seen in the gaols of Durham and Oxford. His novels are masterly as narratives, and contain scenes of actuality. The greatest triumph of his documentary method is the historical novel, The Cloister and the Hearth (1861).

Even here Reade found it necessary to attack something – clerical celibacy, as he did in Griffith Gaunt (1867).

Reade could handle thrilling situations with a skill rivalling that of Wilkie Collins. His eighteen years of effort to write drama gave him a dramatic ability. His realism makes even his most romantic pages convincing. Although his novels are sometimes badly proportioned, he can handle sweeping stories without loss of control. As a preacher he fused his social purpose with his poetic imagination.

**(i) Wilkie Collins (1824-1889):**

Wilkie Collins is better remembered as a successful writer of detective novels. By 1850s the novel was expanding its scope. The range of the novels now began to include the novel of crime, in which the interest lay in detection. Wilkie Collins is the chief master of detective fiction in England.

Wilkie Collins published a life of his father in 1848. His first novel Antonina appeared in 1850. He produced two dramas, The Light House (1855) and The Frozen Deep (1874), in both of which Charles Dickens appeared as an actor. His first outstanding success, The Dead Secret (1857), was followed by the unsurpassed thriller, The Woman in White (1860). Other successes are No Name (1862), Armada (1866), The Moonstone (1868) and The Law and the Lady (1875).

His work is distinguished by exceptional skill in the art of plot construction, a remarkable gift of dramatic suggestion and pictorial power of high order. The beginnings of his books are tremendous. His technical skill is most happily shown in The Moonstone (1860), where all the parts fit into one another beautifully. In Wilkie Collins the novel of domesticity and the novel of romantic adventure are pleasantly blended. He has abundant quality of dramatic suggestion. He arouses interest by the atmosphere of suspense that he creates by cunning hints and suggestions.

**(j). Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894):**

Stevenson had a brave, cheery, wholesome spirit. Aside from their intrinsic value, his novels are interesting in this respect. They mark a return to the pure romanticism of Walter Scott. The novel of the nineteenth century had a very definite purpose. It aimed not only to represent life but to correct it. It also tried to offer a solution to pressing moral and social problems. Stevenson broke away from it into the land of delightful romance in which youth finds an answer to all its questions.

Stevenson started his literary career as an essayist. He published some fantastic stories like those in The New Arabian Nights (1882). The literary results of his travels were An Island Voyage (1878) after a canoe journey in Belgium and Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes (1879), essentially essays. It was not until the publication of Treasure Island as a separate volume in 1883 that Stevenson attained popularity as a writer of fiction. Treasure Island is an absorbing story of pirates and of a hunt for buried gold. It was followed by a series of romances like Kidnapped (1886), The Black Arrow (1888) and The Master of Ballantrae (1889). The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1886) was a profound ethical parable and The Wrong Box (1889) was wildly farcical. In addition he wrote The Wrecker (1892), Catriona (1893), David Balfour (1893) Valima Letters (1895) and the unfinished Weir of Hermiston. Of his verses A Chik's Garden of Verses is not likely to be surpassed.

In the romances Stevenson is at his best when he is dealing with his native Scotland. His essays are a little bit worn out. Some of his books contain lovely prose carefully written and

infused by most able and subtle characterization. Undoubtedly he occupies a prominent place among English prose writers.

#### 4.6.12. Prose Writers:

The prophetic spirit of the great Romantics still survived in this age; but it had passed from the poets to the prose-writers. The guides to whom men turned were scholars, philosophers and such thinkers as Carlyle or Ruskin, and later, for a more limited public Matthew Arnold.

##### a) Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881):

The voice of Thomas Carlyle resounded in the Victorian era generation with greater force and aroused wider echoes than any other. Carlyle's start in life was difficult: the son of a master-mason in a Scottish village, he was born into an uncultured family. Destined at first to be Presbyterian minister, he studied at the University of Edinburgh, where he cut loose from orthodoxy. In order to alleviate his poverty he took to lecturing. Then his books, at first received with complete indifference and disgust, began to find favour, and for the last twenty years of his life he was prominent among the intellectual leaders of the time.

Carlyle's earliest work consisted of translations, essays, and biographies. The best work of this period was Sartor Resartus (1833-4), a sort of allegorical autobiography. The whole book is written in a tone of intense, massive and imaginative irony. Down to this point Carlyle had been chiefly an interpreter. Now he became a historian. The work of his maturity consists of three considerable historical studies, The French Revolution (1837), Cromwell's Letters and Speeches (1845), Frederick II (1858-65), a biography The Life of John Sterling and various essays on social politics: Chartism (1839), On Heroes and Hero Worship (1841), Past and Present (1843), Latter-Day Pamphlets (1850).

Carlyle was both satirist and prophet. He vehemently denounced the evils of the present, even while he dealt with the past. He expounded his doctrines on the conduct of individual man and the organization of society. He fought against materialism and became angry with an age entirely given over to the winning of money and the pursuit of pleasure. Present society was evil for him, he lauded the heroes of the past, the magi, prophets and priest-kings. These passionate ideas are expressed in an eccentric and powerful style into which enter several elements borrowed from German, but which on the whole is entirely personal. Carlyle is, of all the writers of the nineteenth century, the one who bears most plainly the mark of strength.

##### (b) John Ruskin (1819-1900):

Carlyle was indignant with society of his time for its cowardice, its lack of moral resilience, its flabbiness in the struggle against vice and poverty. The indignation of John Ruskin was caused by the ugliness of the industrial world, the lack of beauty and art. Ruskin's campaign for reformation was complementary to that of Carlyle, who he hailed as his master. Born in London, but of a family three-quarters Scottish, brought up by a rigidly pious mother, whose influence, however, was balanced by that of a father who loved art and poetry, Ruskin combined both strains in his own nature. He kept his mother's moral stiffness even when he abandoned her orthodoxy, and he made himself the champion of that artistic culture of which his father had sown in him the first seeds. He was a spiritualizing critic of art before he became the apostle of the social doctrine about a beautiful and harmonious life free from the slavery of the machine.

After an individual and original education at the University of Oxford, Ruskin began a series of studies, Modern Painters (1843-60-), devoted to painting, of a kind almost entirely new in his country. He completed this series with architectural studies The Seven Lamps of Architecture (1849) and The Stones of Venice (1851-3), in which he proclaimed both his admiration of Gothic art, the work of a sincere faith, and his scorn for Renaissance art, the artificial and irreligious product of an imitation of Paganism. Ruskin founded art on faith, on sincerity, on the truth and justness of the symbol. Ruskin's ideas were expressed in magnificent poetic and decorative prose. He also preached the economic doctrine he arrived at. He was an emphatic enemy of the Utilitarians, the denouncer of an industrialized society which spread ugliness abroad throughout the world and was itself founded on abject poverty, on a soulless labour that desolated human life. His numerous lectures and books like Unto This Last (1862), Sesame and Lilies (1865), Fors Clavigera (19871), Munera Pulveris (1872), and others, stirred public opinion. Indeed, Ruskin founded in England what was really a new religion, wherein the quest for beauty in daily life of all, even the most humble, became a sort of duty.

#### (c) Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800-59):

Macaulay was educated privately, and then at Cambridge. From his infancy he was remarkable for his precocity and his prodigious memory. The collapse of his father's business led him to study law. He contributed essays to The Edinburgh Review. He was in parliament and later in India for four years in a lucrative legal post; then, returning to England, he re-entered political life.

Most of Macaulay's poetry is included in his Lays of Ancient Rome (1842). His verse is virile stuff, moving with vigour and assurance, and is full of action and colour. His essays are of two kinds—those dealing with literary subjects, such as those on Milton, Byron, and Bunyon, and the historical studies, including the famous compositions on Warren Hastings and Lord Clive. His History of England, the first two volumes of which were published in 1849, was unfinished at his death.

#### 4.6.13. Conclusion:

Though Victorian Age was an age of Prose, there was much quantity of poetic output reflecting the complex and conflicting ideas of the contemporary society. To a great extent Victorian poetry is optimistic and religious. The most popular form of literature was the novel and much of the work was of a high standard. The dramatic output was not much during this period. Poets like Tennyson, Browning and Swinburne also produced a few plays.

To sum up, the rich, diversified, and prolific Victorian Age continued the Romantic tradition; sometimes it also contradicted it because of the greater share given to Realism. The Victorians had in general a great respect for the established code of morality. But towards the end of the period reaction had set in. Some poets and prose-writers, such as Rossetti, Swinburne, Meredith and Samuel Butler, had set an example and formed a taste for new adventures, for freedom and daring, unrestrained by the prevailing conventions.

#### 4.6.14. Sample Questions:

1. What are the characteristic features of the Victorian Age?
2. How is Tennyson a representative of his Age?

3. What is the contribution of Robert Browning to English Poetry?
4. Comment on the major novelists during the Victorian Age.
5. Write a note on Pre-Raphaelite Philosophy.
6. What is the Oxford Movement?

#### **4.6.15. Reference Books:**

1. Peter Westland, The Victorian Age 1830 – 1880.
2. George Sampson, The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature.
3. Sir A.W. Ward and A.R. Waller (ed), The Cambridge History of English Literature.
4. S.C. Mundra, English Literature for Competitive Examinations.

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**Dr. Y.S.R. Anjaneyulu**

**Lesson – 4.7****THE AGE OF HARDY****4.7.1. Objective:**

The objectives of this lesson are -

- (a) to trace how the novel has become a major genre in English literature.
- (b) to show how the writers represented their contemporary scene and problems.
- (c) To introduce major writers of the period and their philosophies.

**Structure:****4.7.1. Objectives****4.7.2. Introduction****4.7.3. Poetry**

- (a) W.B. Yeats
- (b) Robert Bridges
- (c) John Masefield
- (d) Walter de la Mare
- (e) Alfred Noyes
- (f) The War Poets

**4.7.4. Prose and Fiction**

- (a) Thomas Hardy
- (b) Henry James
- (c) Joseph Conrad
- (d) H.G. Wells
- (e) Samuel Butler
- (f) George Gissing
- (g) John Galsworthy
- (h) Arnold Bennet
- (i) Rudyard Kipling

**4.7.5. Other Prose Writers**

- (a) G.K. Chesterton
- (b) Hilaire Belloc
- (c) James M. Barrie
- (d) W.H. Hudson.

**4.7.6. Drama**

- (a) G.B. Shaw
- (b) J.M. Synge



**(c) Oscar Wilde****4.7.7. Conclusion****4.7.8. Sample Questions****4.7.9. Reference Books****4.7.2. Introduction:**

The earlier Victorian age had continued the Romantic tradition though gradually giving greater and greater share to Realism. Towards the end of the period there appeared a pessimistic spirit which gathered strength in the following age. The period 1890-1918 is notable for many major writers like Hardy, James, Conrad, Shaw and others in terms of their literary productivity. Thomas Hardy is the most representative of writers of this period during which we can see the birth of modern literature. This period sees the end of the long reign of Queen Victoria (1901) and of the stability which the country had so long enjoyed. The Boer War (1899-1902) turned the attention from imperial expansion to social problems at home. There was a period of sweeping social reform and unprecedented progress. Home Rule for Ireland, Free Trade or Protection, Votes for Women, the decline of agriculture and the growing urbanization of the country were major problems of the day. Britain was gradually drawn into the European conflicts in the face of growing German strength; and national rivalries finally led to the appalling world war of 1914-18.

The full effect of the Educational Act of 1870, strengthened by the Act of 1902, began to make itself felt in the pre-War years. It resulted in the spread of literacy, was accompanied by the awakening of the national conscience to the evils resulting from the Industrial Revolution.

**4.7.3. Poetry:**

The first fourteen years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were marked by confidence and joy. Poets sang and told stories as if that were the purpose of poetry. Hardy, at sixty, gave up writing novels, and began to write most of his poetry. The earlier poetry of Yeats showed the influence of the theory of Art for art's sake. With the new century there was a change in Yeats' ideas and poetry. His friendship with the poet and dramatist Synge and his association with the nationalist movement in Irish politics helped to change his ideas. Poetry during the War period had important figures like Rupert Brooke, Robert Graves, Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon.

**(a). W.B. Yeats (1865-1939)**

Yeats was a leader of the Celtic Revival in Ireland. He was in love with Maud Gonne, the nationalist, and remained deeply attached to her in spite of her refusal of him. The practical passions of his life were poetry, Irish culture and occult literature. His central human concerns, the vigour of his imagery and the personality stamped on his style carry the reader unresisting through formidable substance. Yeats made poetry his servant. It became a vessel that could hold whatever he wanted to put into it. There was eventually no limit on the moods and topics, no restriction to particular vocabulary or idiom.

In modern poetry Yeats stands out as a dominant figure because he taught younger poets how to write. He came forward as the reformer of poetry by breaking not with the past but with the present. The War and its peacetime consequences changed Yeats's attitude to spiritualism. The passive melancholy and swooning music to be found among the exquisitely phrased lyrics of The

Wind Among the Reeds (1899) were purged from his mature work. A sinewed strength is evident in Responsibilities (1914) and in The Wild Swans at Coole (1919). Thereafter Yeats is a poet of sharp-edged complexity with a ruthless honesty and a reverberating striking power. The two volumes of Poetical Works (1906-07) included the lyrical and dramatic poems. The eight volumes of Collected Works in Verse and Prose (1908) included the poems In the Seven Woods (1903) and the essays Discoveries (1907). Plays for an Irish Theatre (1913), some of which were written with the assistance of his friend Lady Gregory, included the prose play Cathleen ni Houlihan (1902), besides the morality play The Hour Glass (1904) and the heroic farce The Green Helmet (1910). The first volume of Macmillan's Collected Edition came out in 1922. Autobiographies was published in 1926. He offered his volume of essays A Packet for Ezra Pound (1929) to his English friend Morris. Many of the poems in Collected Poems (1950) take us out of the hypnotic dream world of the Celtic twilight into a daylight world, always of honesty and courage. Some individual poems, such as "The Second Coming", "Byzantium", and "Leda and the Swan" are widely acknowledged to be among the finest achievements of the early twentieth century, as "Innisfree" and "Morgan" were among the finest achievements of the late nineteenth century.

Yeats, in spirit, was always a bard, and thought of poetry as something chanted, not as something printed. He was a world poet and was recognized in 1923 when he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. His death in 1939 inspired several outstanding poets to produce verses.

#### **(b). Robert Bridges (1844-1930):**

Robert Bridges is a poet whose Victorian output made his name, though he was to become a twentieth century Poet Laureate in 1913. Taking up literature professionally in 1882, after practising medicine in London, Bridges had the advantage over Hopkins of attaining publication in his lifetime.

Verse dramas on Classical themes (1883-94) won Robert Bridges a reputation among scholars. He was widely known with his Shorter Porms (1896). His three series of Poems (1873, 1879 and 1880) and his Shorter Poems (1890) have fed the anthologies with felicitous verse. His long poem The Testament of Beauty (1929) went through many editions and gave rise to commentaries on the poet's philosophy of life. The main value of The Testament is rather in the field of scholarly reflection than in the field of poetry. Bridges was inclined to the conventional in poetic diction, though he sometimes, experimented in metre. He is more readable in the best of his shorter pieces. One of his best short pieces is the introductory sonnet to his dead friend, Hopkins. Commenting on an earlier set of sonnets The Growth of Love (1876), Hopkins was appreciative of Robert Bridges' fine phrasing and sequence of feeling.

#### **(c). Walter De la Mare (1873-1956):**

A master among twentieth century poets in the art of creating atmosphere is Walter de la Mare. He was the master of the short lyric and wrote several hundreds of them. For over fifty years he poured out poetry and stories that won him the respect of fellow writers for the finish and precision of his artistry. De la Mare can readily conjure up an atmosphere of uncanny mystery. He can make eeriness palpable through images of spellbinding suggestiveness. In "The Listeners" a traveller knocks on a moonlit door and calls:

"Is any one there?"

To receive no reply, and to shout,

“Tell them I came..

..... that I kept my word”

before riding away into the silence.

The technique is effective over a wide area of experience involving magic and mystery, and it makes De la Mare an interesting writer for children. His poetry is a poetry of events and experiences uninterrupted. He is much concerned with what is not understandable, not known. He is concerned with what is not cleared up, not finished.

**(d). Alfred Noyes:** Noyes was twenty-two when his first book of poems appeared in 1902, and every year up to 1914 he published at least one fresh volume, among them being the twelve-book epic Drake. His output continued to be copious. His poetry before 1914 was popular. It possessed the qualities of spirit and technique which won for him the admiration of judges and fulfilled the idea of the public as to what good poetry was. Noyes was a Christian by faith. He had no doubt of the immortality of poetry, for “where is the death can touch a song?” The beauty of nature inspired much of his verse. Much too arose from his love of England. The muse of Alfred Noyes was at once serious with high purpose and alive with high spirits and humour, real and fantastic.

**(e). John Masefield (1878-1967):**

John Masefield’s subjects are mostly about the folks or underprivileged class, for whom he sings because, he says, “To simple people poetry is a gift of the gods which fills out and makes radiant this life of ours.” He is at heart a poet and a singer. As a boy Masefield liked the songs, dances and folk plays of the villagers. He spent some tough years as a foremast hand and learned to be a sailorman. Later he did some odd jobs in New York and London. When the First World War broke out, he actively participated in it in different positions. He was an eloquent voice of England’s propaganda in America. Still later, as official historian of the war, he wrote Gallipoli, a superb prose story.

John Masefield’s first volume, Salt Water Ballads published in 1902 when he was twenty four, had declared the coming of a new poet. He made his name with The Everlasting Mercy in 1911. He steadily built up his reputation with numerous poetic forms and volumes. The war made little check or change in his poetic production. Masefield had something of the universality of Shakespeare, a broad humanity. He could tell a story in verse with zest, unafraid of melodrama or of lavish pictorialism. In narrative he took Chaucer as his master. He loved the English countryside and he valued it for the national heritage and the local colour. His poems did not shun the dark mystery of life. His was the large view of Shakespeare and Scott, in which the tragic makes only its right proportion in the sum of life.

Masefield was of the opinion that poetry should be a reflection of common life and written in the common tongue. He has produced twenty-nine books of verse. In his Collected Poems (1932), Masefield unconsciously tells us of himself and his subject. His poems reveal his philosophy or attitude toward the world . In some of his poems he looks back to recall what he has most valued in life, and what “golden moments” he keeps among his cherished memories.

Among his long narrative poems Right Royal is the tale of a horse race, King Cole takes us afoot with a travelling circus, and Midsummer Night retells some of the old Arthurian legends. Reynard, The Fox is the longest poem written by Masefield. In it he attempts to repeat what Chaucer did in his Canterbury Tales, that is, to portray a cross-section of contemporary English

life. Masfield's poems are English to the core. They reflect his outstanding quality, namely his intensely English spirit.

#### (f). The War Poets:

When the war broke out many English poets welcomed it, inspired the youth to join the ranks, enthused the brave soldiers and were confident of victory. Thomas Hardy, at 77 in 1917, declared that if only he were younger, he himself would "serve with never a slack". Yeats and T.S. Eliot were the two major poets who stood outside the War. As the War advanced many poets realized the futility of war.

**Wilfred Owen** emerged as a great poet of the War. He derived a new inspiration from Sassoon. He had written poetry from the age of seventeen, and his early worship had been for Keats, Shelley, Tennyson and Arnold. The outbreak of war found him with high poetic ambitions. At first he had a sense of new crusades and modern knightliness. But by 1917 he had come to a strong pacifist position, holding that "one of Christ's essential commands was: passivity at any price!" Wilfred Owen declared that his subject was war and the pity of war and the true poets ought to be truthful. He considered the war a monstrous nightmare. Owen depicted the battle scene with a terrible, quiet clearness. He called the modern warfare "the unnaturalness of weapons". It was Owen's technique as well as his attitude that made him one of the "ancestors" hailed by Cecil Day Lewis and his contemporaries.

Owen's poetic gifts were distinctive. The contrast presented in Greater Love between sexual love and the soldier's sacrifice is sharp and profound. The red lips of the beloved are not as red as the 'stained stones kissed by the English dead'. Full warm-heartedness is seen in the hot, large 'hearts made great with shot'. This imaginative penetration in sustaining correspondences is evident time and again in his work. In Strange Meeting the poet has a visionary encounter with an enemy he has killed and who shares his sense of waste.

**Siegfried Sassoon** was the true poet of the war period and had inspired Owen. He conveyed the bitter truth, tore off any mask from the ugly face of reality and was angry with the heartless and the hypocrites. He conveyed the horror of the battlefield more vividly and in detail. The heroic in the war was gone, and soldiers prayed for a wound that they might be sent home or were driven to suicide. Throughout his war poetry, Sassoon expressed a pitiful sense of the terrible lot of the survivors, with their "dreams from the pit" as well as their broken bodies.

The other important War poets are **Rupert Brooke** and **Robert Graves**.

#### 4.7.4. Prose and Fiction:

##### (a). Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)

Hardy's parents wished him to become a clergyman but Hardy was inclined towards architecture and studied Gothic art for eight years. In 1863 he gained the prize and medal of the Institute of British Architects and the Tite Prize for architectural design. Hardy started his literary career with poetry, then turned to novel and finally returned to his first love poetry. Some of his first poems appear many years later. Others were transposed into passages of the novels. His first published novel was Desperate Remedies (1871). In regular succession he wrote – Under the Greenwood Tree (1872), A Pair of Blue Eyes (1873), Far from the Madding Crowd (1874), The Hand of Ethelberta (1876), The Return of the Native (1878), The Trumpet Major (1880), A Laodicean (1881). Two on a Tower (1882), The Mayor of Casterbridge (1886), The Woodlanders (1887),

Tess of the D'Urbervilles (1891), Jude the Obscure (1896), and The Well Beloved (1897). Hardy was read and admired by a large following of thoughtful persons. Hardy turned to poetry and published Wessex Poems (1898), Poems of the Past and Present (1901), Time's Laughing Stocks (1909), Satires of Circumstance (1914), and Moments of Vision (1917). His poetry has pure lyric inspiration, the vision of a poet and the veracity of an undeluded mind.

In his novels Hardy has created an immortal region –Wessex, which is situated in the primitive corner of England. Hardy's Wessex is partly a reality and partly imaginary like Shakespeare's Forest of Arden and R.K. Narayan's Malgudi. Scott James writes that "the Wessex described by Hardy lives in the imagination more distinctly than any other region described by an English writer, perhaps any writer." Hardy's Wessex is not only a scenic setting for the stories but more than that. It is almost a character brooding constantly in all his works. The characters in the novels of Hardy are made what they are by Wessex. Everyone of them is touched by a lumber of superstitions, folklore, dialect and orally transmitted ballads. When they move out of it, they feel very much out of place.

Hardy's creative power shines brightly in the painting of the rustic characters. His characters can be divided into three grades: the protagonists, those characters that help the main characters and the rustic by-standers. These rustic by-standers are called by different names as 'the rustic chorus' and 'the philosophic party.' Hardy's rustics give important information and true comments. They are quiet but deeply interested observers who see more of what is going on than the gentle folks are aware and they are continually dropping shrewd comments. Hardy first introduced them in Under the Greenwood Tree and made them more important in Far from the Madding Crowd, The Mayor of Casterbridge and The Return of the Native. But in his final works their importance goes down. These rustics are rooted in the Wessex soil.

With his penetrative power Hardy delineated his female characters as well as his male characters. He portrays women not only from outside but also from inside. He analyses their mind and heart. All his women have love as their primary passion. The women in Hardy's gallery are only comparable to Shakespeare's women. They are the radiant daughters of Nature. His portrayal of women displays his great penetrating power and a great study of their psychology. They are better than his male portrayals and dominate the plots of most of his novels.

Hardy is regarded as a pessimist. His melancholic view of life was caused by the social conditions of his time. It was an age of transition when the industrial revolution was bringing new evils and troubles. He was conscious of man's helplessness in the face of circumstance. When he saw that the world was full of pain and disappointment, he argued that the human existence was primarily painful. In his opinion, "Happiness is but an occasional episode in a general drama of pain." He believes that all is not right in the world. He once said, "I discovered several years ago that I was living in a world where nothing bears out its promise in practice." Hardy's pessimism is not depressing. According to him it is the cruel fate which works against the designs of man and thwarts his happiness. He is made to suffer endlessly. But this does not mean that he is depressing or a thorough-going pessimist. He believes that there are evils in the world but they are remediable. Destiny may seem pitiless and cruel but the nobility of the characters in facing it with courage and sympathy towards one another evokes admiration.

In Hardy's outlook on life there are two points especially insistent – his sense of law and his sense of pity. His conviction was that a spiritual logic governs men's lives, and the Greeks called it Nemesis. There is only one other novelist who has touched the logic of life with the same persistence as Hardy – that is, George Eliot. Hardy's sense of pity is perhaps more acute than

that of any modern writer. As an artist and as a painter of certain concrete aspects of life Hardy is among the greatest in English literature.

**(b). Henry James (1843-1916):**

Henry James was born in New York. The North American Review, Nation and The Atlantic Monthly accepted his first stories and articles in the 1860s and later employed him as correspondent in Europe. In 1875 he left America for good settling first in Paris and then in London, which he found "interesting, inspiring, even exhilarating." It partly inspired his first period as a novelist from Roderick Hudson (1876) to The Portrait of a Lady (1881). James was supremely well qualified to undertake the main work of this period, which was to be the theme of some of his later work also: to interpret the "international situation." The first novels are interesting for the masterly manner in which the "Situation" is explored in all its possibilities. The middle period runs roughly from The Bostonians (1886) nearly to the end of the century and includes two other impressive works The Spoils of Poynton (1897) and What Maisie Knew (1898). The middle period is a crowded one and James was most easily in control of his material. It includes his most celebrated ghost story The Turn of the Screw (1898) and some of his best short stories. It also includes his unsuccessful period of playwriting which ended in 1896 with his retirement to Rye, in Sussex, his home for the rest of his life. The experience in writing for the stage had sharpened his style in writing novels. His novel The Awkward Age (1899) is written almost entirely in dialogue. Though it is a failure as a novel, it is a remarkable piece of writing from a purely technical point of view. The rest of the later novels, with the partial exception of The Wings of the Dove (1902), can be described as "interesting, formidable, fearsome, and fatiguing." To come to these novels first of all is to take the risk of being put off James for ever.

Some modern critics see James as the Shakespeare of the novel. But James's last period should have been different from Shakespeare's last period. Shakespeare's tragic-comedies are profound in meaning, yet so simple in structure. James, after his disappointments in the realms of the sensational story and in the theatre, seems to have resigned himself to the fact that his work would never be popular in his life time.

Henry James is the first Anglo-American writer of importance. He is the precursor of other American writers of varying stature who spent most of their lives in England. He is Anglo-American in the sense that his novels and stories frequently record the impact of England upon Americans or America upon English people. In his work we find a double inheritance: one stemming from Hawthorne and the Puritan ethos of New England, the other from Jane Austen and the later George Eliot. Though he did not become widely read till many years after his death, James's gradual rise to fame is due to the insistence of literary critics like F.R. Leavis in England and Edmund Wilson and others in America. Some critics regard Henry James as the American Jane Austen as Mark Twain was regarded as the American Dickens. James knew women, and he saw men largely through women's eyes. He hardly deals at all with men when they are together in male company, men without women. The lifelong bachelor James, perhaps partly through the influence of the French novelists, seems to have known so much more about the female character than any of the husbands and fathers who had greater opportunities for observing it.

**(c). Joseph Conrad (1857-1924):**

Jozef Teodor Konrad Nalecz Korzeniowski, who became popular as Conrad, is considered the greatest English novelist of the period between James and Lawrence. He is perhaps the most remarkable figure in the whole history of English literature. Born in Poland, he became a French

sailor at seventeen, an English master mariner at twenty-one, and under the name of Joseph Conrad, one of the greatest of English novelists at forty-five. He learned French before English and produced his first novel Almayer's Folly in 1895. He had the profound influence of the French masters on his literary career, which held till it was replaced, in his own view, by the influence of Henry James from about 1903 onwards. His third novel The Nigger of the "Narcissus" (1897) brought him indisputable classic rank. It is one of his finest stories and it was based on personal experience. We find the same personal line in Typhoon (1903) and The Shadow Line (1917). An earlier reviewer called Conrad the "Kipling of the South Seas." His Heart of Darkness (1902) is, perhaps the finest short novel in English. It is drawn from his experiences as captain of a river steamer in the Belgian Congo in 1890.

Conrad is rightly regarded as the best writer about the Sea and seamen who have ever lived. As Henry James once said to him, no one before Conrad had ever known, for the purposes of literary art, what he had known. But he disclaimed the classification, "Sea story Writer" for some of his best work is not about the sea at all. His most ambitious novel Nostramo (1904), as Conrad tells us, is "the most anxiously meditated of the longer novels. It is a political novel set in an imaginary South American republic. The Secret Agent (1907) is a Dickensian study, dedicated to H.G. Wells and has an anarchist plot in London. Under Western Eyes (1911) takes place in Russia and Switzerland.

Conrad's last works are not so impressive as his earlier ones. They include Chance (1911), Victory (1915), The Rescue (1920) and The Rover (1924). Conrad's weakness is that his perception of human nature degenerates almost into melodrama. E.M. Forster speaks of Conrad's noble obscurity that "The Secret Casket of his genius contains a vapour rather than a jewel."

#### **(d). H.G. Wells (1866-1946):**

Herbert George Wells's writing career extends from 1893 to 1945. He wrote over a hundred books. His large output has "ideas about everything... in the utmost profusion" and proceeds to pour them out in an unending stream of novels, essays, pamphlets and others. There is a fairly general agreement as to which of Wells' works have survived the years and which have not. Nearly everyone agrees that most of the middle and later works tend to become a bore. One of the chief virtues of the early Wells is his splendid economy.

Wells's first scientific romance, The Time Machine (1895), is a great success. He rewrote it six times in seven years before it was published. His best short stories from the Stolen Bacillus (1895), The Country of the Blind (1911) have his characteristic spark and wisdom. Economy of style and power of imagination brought him great reputation. The immense sales of his early scientific stories was partly responsible for his earning a world reputation earlier in life than any English writer since Dickens. There is a tendency to compare Wells with Dickens. Wells's such admirable social comedies as Love and Mr. Lewishan (1900), Kipps (1905) – the novel which Henry James considered his masterpiece – Tono-Bungay (1909) and the History of Mr. Polly (1910) are highly enjoyable. But they are light-weight Dickens. Some critics are of the opinion that these novels will outlive the best of the scientific romances.

Most of Wells's writing is called "Journalism". In his correspondence with Henry James, Wells accepts the name of "journalism" for most of his writing, whether fictional or non-fictional form. He said, "I had rather be called a journalist than an artist." His novels are not just written for the occasion. The Country of the Blind, The Time Machine, The Invisible Man (1897) and The First Men in the Moon (1901) approach to the status of a work of art. Wells has got an international

reputation. His works are translated into every language in the world. It is unfortunate that he has not survived to see the beginnings of the Space Age he had prophesied so long before.

**(e). Samuel Butler (1825-1902):**

Mechanism and modernity have not well-satisfied the urges of the people. Economic well-being and comfortability in living have not done away with the problems of the people. Proximity to nature and purity of life have been threatened and sense of isolation and a longing for belonging have surfaced. Some thinkers and writers are of the opinion that all contemporary problems arose because of modernity and mechanism; and therefore should be denounced. In a way they revolted against mechanism.

Samuel Butler is regarded as one who revolted against mechanism through his satirical faculty. His books are regarded as a storehouse of ironic comment and suggestion. His influence on Bernard Shaw is profound. He published Erewhon in 1872. Its immediate successor, The Fair Haven (1873), provides an ironical setting for the matter of his pamphlet, The Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, written in 1865. He had begun, about 1872, The Way of All Flesh; but it was laid aside, worked over for several years, and posthumously published in 1903. His books of scientific controversy include Life and Habit (1877), Evolution Old and New (1879), Unconscious Memory (1880), Luck of Cunning (1887), and The Deadlock in Darwinism (1890). He loved Handel fanatically and wanted to compose a Handelian piece on the subject of Ulysses. His conviction was that the Odyssey was written by a woman. He expressed this view in The Authoress of the Odyssey (1897). In 1899 appeared his Shakespeare's Sonnets, reconsidered and in part re-arranged, combating the view that the poems were academic exercises. Butler's critical works exhibit originality. A selection from his manuscript collections appeared in 1912 under the title The Note-Books of Samuel Butter. It is, in many respects, the most attractive and rewarding of his writings.

Butler's criticism of Darwin was sound; but it did not entitle him to be hailed as a pioneer in science. He had made no investigations and no discoveries. The first book in which he challenged destructively the current values in morals and religion was Erewhon (1872), a satirical "Nowhere", in which disease is a crime, crime is a misfortune, religion is a banking system, and education the suppression of originality. With singular prophetic insight the Erewhonians banish machines from their Republic on the ground that they will evolve and then become the masters of their makers. Much of the success of his novel The Way of All Flesh lies in its casual satire and in its humorous asides. Its criticism of the relations between parents and children is deep and searching. As a humourist and satirist, expressing himself in lucid, personal prose, he takes high place.

**(f). George Gissing (1857-1903):**

George Robert Gissing is another Victorian rebel and realist. He experienced several misfortunes. Indeed, he seemed born to encounter mischances in life. He became the chronicler in fiction of lives in which success had no part. His first novel, Workers in the Dawn, was published at his own expense in 1880. He endured poverty. He was determined to live a literary life and refused to touch journalism in any form. His more important books are The Unclassed (1884), Isabel Clarendon (1886), Demos (1886), Thyrza (1887), The Nether World (1891) and The Odd Women (1893). There are several later volumes that add nothing to what he had already said. When he could follow his heart and write what he wished, he set to work upon a novel of Roman history, Veranilda (1904), which he could not finish. Three books outside the department of fiction are Charles Dickens: A Critical Study (1898), By the Ionian Sea (1901), and The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft (1903).



In form the novels of Gissing are Victorian; in matter they reject the current themes and beliefs. He was influenced by the art of French realists, but he was no follower of any school. He was the first English novelist of importance to consider seriously the psychology of sex. He was a close student and admirer of Dickens. Gissing saw nothing in poverty but a squalid, mirthless waste on the outskirts of hideous commercialism. He pictured it without pity and sympathy. His novels that depict a higher level of suburban society have the same kind of hopelessness. His books are stories of defeat without dignity. He had a sound appreciation of Dickens, who has brought comfort and courage to many lives. His monograph on Dickens was the first sound critical study by a fellow novelist. The most pleasing of Gissing's books is The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft – part diary, part essays, part confessions. Gissing is the uncompromising historian of the seamy side of later-day Victorian England.

**(g). John Galsworthy (1867-1933):**

Galsworthy was like Wells in his absorption of social problems. He was a finely cultured gentleman and a lover of solitude. He refused the proffered honour of knighthood. He was a craftsman who tried to make his every novel or play a finished work of art. He wrote as if speaking with an equal in a cultivated prose style. He looked upon the masses of humanity as mostly victims of their own ignorance or folly.

Several of Galsworthy's early novels failed to find a publisher. After fifteen years of training he wrote The Man of Property (1906), which raised him to the front rank of living novelists. In this first successful work he created a new type of fiction by balancing the virtues and vices of his hero, Forsyte against the vices and virtues of other members of the same family. It is the method which he held in his subsequent novels and plays. In his next novel Galsworthy carried out his theme by portraying a second generation of Forsytes. He became father of a school of fiction writers whose heroes or heroines are the progenitors of the characters of a succession of later stories. Still in love with his brain child, he told of other Forsyte generations, and collected them all in The Forsyte Saga (1922). A good way to get acquainted with his work is to begin with The Man of Property, dealing with middle-class Victorian society, and follow it with Flowering Wilderness. The best single selection from his thirty volumes of fiction may be Indian Summer of a Forsyte, which is commonly regarded as his masterpiece. The Forsyte Saga deservedly won him the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1932.

His plays: Galsworthy was Shaw's chief rival in the problem play. His best plays include The Silver Box (1906), Strife (1909), Justice (1910), Loyalties (1922) and The Forest (1924). He had a passionate concern for social and racial justice.

**(h). Arnold Bennet (1867-1931):**

Arnold Bennet was a realist like Somerset Maugham and Henry James. His interest in local character can be clearly seen in A Man from the North (1898). He began his distinctively regional work in 1902 with Anna of the Five Towns and continued it in a number of novels and stories. Each was written with a powerful and striking realism, a technique then new in English fiction. Bennet's region is the intensely urban and industrial district, which he has made known to the world as the Five Towns, all fictions. Bennet speaks with affection of mill chimneys, tramway lines, plot banks, shunting yards and furnaces. Machinery clags harshly through his books

The novels The Old Wives' Tale (1908), Claymonger (1910), and Riceyman Steps (1923) are Bennet's great pieces. The ordinary course of his narrative is amazingly sprinkled with references

to the Five Towns. His use of dialects is sparing, though telling. He carved every piece of his work with a meticulous accuracy and painted it with a clear local colour.

### (i) Rudyard Kipling (865-1936)

Rudyard Kipling was born in Bombay, India. He came of a religious family. He inherited from his father a feeling for the cultural past of India and from his mother a great deal of Pre-Raphaelite artistic sensibility. He had his education in England. He was a loyal subject of the queen Empress. To him imperialism was a religion not to be questioned. He could see no justification for the transfer of power and responsibility from British to Indian hands. The glory of imperialism, the assumed superiority of British, the darkly mysterious natives, and the imaginary "law of the jungle" dominated his literary work. By his skillful use of words in presenting a vivid picture to the eye or creating an impression of wonder or fear in the mind, he became at twenty-five the best known living writer in the world. While in Vermont he wrote Captains Courageous, The Jungle Book, The Seven Seas and Many Inventions. The remainder of his life was spent in a quiet Sussex village, where he wrote voluminously but with decreasing effect. In 1907 he received the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Kipling unquestionably succeeded with the short story. Kim (1901), probably, is his best prose work. It reflects the experiences of a boy who wanders over India with a holy man which is supposed to be a realistic portrayal of native life. But best of all and most popular is the Jungle Books (1894-95). These two books introduce the readers to the India of animal life, with Mowgli the wolf-child. The fascinating Jungle Books suggest an odd grouping of Kipling's characters into the less real, the more real, and the wholly real, the oddity being that reality is found where we least expect it.

His poetry: Kipling is also a well-known poet. There is a ballad-like quality in his poetry. One of his best poems is "Ballad of East and West. Most formally perfect is "Danny Deever," beginning with dirge-like measure and ending with quickstep played after a military execution. Kipling's lyric narrative verse runs the whole gamut from good poetry to poor trash. He was always ready to speak for his nation. He offended several countries by airing his arrogant opinions in his poems.

Maturity of a kind came early to Kipling, and he soon reached a point beyond which he never grew. As was most inevitable in a popular writer of such early fame, Kipling in his later work tended to repeat his old successes. The majority of the work by which he will be remembered belongs to the nineteenth century; and the majority of it belongs to India. The literary reputation of Kipling has gone through three phases. The first phase lasted the greater part of his life and reached its peak in 1907, when he was awarded the Nobel Prize. The second phase, lasting from 1920s to 1940s or 1950s, was one of steadily, decreasing reputation. The third phase looks at him more tolerantly. Nirad C. Chaudhuri considers Kipling to be "the only English writer who will have a permanent place in English literature with books on Indian themes, and who will also be read by everyone who wants to know not only British India but also timeless India."

### 4.7.5. Other Prose Writers

Chesterton and Belloc stand out among the essayists by the range, depth and energy of their genius. Among the older essayists **Augustine Birrell** and **Austin Dobson** made their names as bookmen of taste. **E.V. Lucas** made a good harvest from his periodical writing. He never left the world of literary and artistic culture to contact the hurly burly of modern life. **A.G. Gardiner** was nearer to contemporary affairs. He was more interested in writing of the personalities of

public figures than in handling general ideas. Sir Max Beerbohm wrote a little, but all that he wrote had a wit and a style. He made occasional broadcasts which showed his remarkable skill as an essayist.

**(a). G.K. Chesterton (1874-1936):**

It was as a literary journalist, particularly in the columns of the Daily News, that Chesterton first came to the fore. As a journalist he was successful. His essays in various collected volumes are about people and the topical disputes. The essay, with its tradition of personal work, was the ideal form for him. As for his themes, he said: "these notes ... concern all sorts of things from lady barristers to cavemen, and from psychoanalysis to free verse".

From the beginning Chesterton was a religious man, and in his later years he was received into the Roman Catholic Church. His faith was centred on Incarnation. He declared that the chief idea of his life was "the idea of taking things with gratitude and not taking things for granted". When he began to write, the progressive thinkers like Wells and Shaw were on the crest of their materialistic optimism. He found that faith was shattered by the World War and in its place arose the barrenness and despair, but his own faith had only deepened. It was a faith in man as well as in God. He was a liberalist and upheld the poor against the power of wealth, the common man against the State, innocent pleasure against repression and common sense against faddists. As he was good-tempered and sensible, he could not compromise with the modern industrial monopolists.

Chesterton was against the socialism of Wells and Shaw. He was opposed to the contrasting ideal of Distributism. His novels can best be considered along with his essays. The opening of The Napoleon of Notting Hill (1904), for example, could be an introduction to a work of fiction or a work of non-fiction with equal plausibility. His many essays in various collections from The Defendant (1901) to The Well and The Shallows (1935) could easily have developed into novels had the author seen fit. The title of one such collection, Tremendous Trifles (1909), would do for a general description of the novels. Chesterton usually begins with something apparently trifling or commonplace and then extracts a paradoxically important meaning out of it. This is his main method in fiction and non-fiction alike. As light entertainment, the end justifies the means. The Club of Queen Trades (1905) and some of the Father Brown Stories (1911-35) stand high in their field.

Chesterton suffers in proportion to the length of his fiction. In style, he owes a great deal to Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and New Arabian Nights. The first few chapters are nearly always the best and in the last chapters we find a sense of strain. It appears to be dragging. This is even more true of Manalive (1912) and The Flying Inn (1914). The initial idea is good, and promises well for the length of a short story. Chesterton was also a poet of considerable talent. His The Wild Knight and Other Poems (1900) and such later verses as "Anti-Christ" (1914) and "Wine, Water and Song" (1915) are among the best light verse of the period.

**(b). Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953):**

Hilaire Belloc had much in common with his friend and literary associate, Chesterton. Belloc was a born essayist. As an essayist he ranged widely, full of ideas, a traveler, a historian, a hearty lover of good things of life and the sound traditions of western civilization. He progressed through his essays more seriously than Chesterton. He was for the rights of men to live their lives fully and freely, under God, as their minds and bodies reasonably urged them. In the light of Catholic faith, he opposed the modern progressive materialistic philosophy. As a historian his work was vivid and substantial. Perhaps his best history is The French Revolution (1911).

**(c). James M. Barrie (1860-1937):**

Barrie, by instinct, throughout his life was a journalist. He was always on the lookout for something he could sell to the public. His genius made him, next to Kipling, the most widely read author in the English - speaking world. On the surface he was by turns playful, humorous, whimsical, pathetic and sentimental. Below this glitter was an undercurrent of satire, as if he were thinking, "What fools these mortals be!"

Barrie began his career by writing sketches of the people of his native village. He came to learn that he bored the readers by his realism. Then he turned to romance, and found himself on the road to fame and fortune. In the biography Margaret Ogilvy he gave an honest account of the Scottish peasantry. When they reappeared in his Window in Thrums (1889) and Auld Licht Idylls they were the heroes and heroines of romantic tales. Barrie touched the height of his fame with the Little Minister (1891) a novel with melodramatic ending, portaying a young minister who scandalized his church folk by falling in love with a gypsy girl. In truly romantic fashion the gypsy girl turned out to be a high-born lady of whom the church folk could be proud. This immensely popular novel was followed by Sentimental Tommy and its sequel Tommy and Grizel. It is said that criticism of these two works, one a disappointment to his readers, the other a bore, turned Barrie away from fiction.

His plays: When Barrie's The Little Minister was dramatized and staged, it was a thundering success. Of the long plays the greatest favourite at the time was Peter Pan. The most enduring as a stage comedy is The Admirable Crichton. In this play a shipwrecked family of the upper class find, to its amazement, that the butler is the only one who knows what to do when people are cast away on a desert island. So the servant reverses the traditional human roles by becoming the master. One of the most fascinating plays is Dear Brutus, dramatising the wish of almost every man that he might have the chance to live his life over again. Among the other plays Quality Street has the old fashioned charm. The Old Lady Shows her Medals is purely sentimental.

**(d). William Henry Hudson (1841-1922):**

Hudson's record of his early years makes one of the best autobiographies. The forests of South America inspired his Green Mansions (1904), one of his best known books. He wrote steadily, but he was an old man before he received any wide recognition. Hudson was a scientific observer of wild life, especially of birds. As his writing advanced, birds, animals, and insects, were only one strand of his very detailed picture of English life. He wrote, as a historian and a traveller, about several parts of England. All the time in reading him one is aware of his personality. He wrote the purest English prose of the century, scientifically precise without jargon, sensitive, concrete and detailed without loss of clarity and ease.

**4.7.6. The Drama:**

The first decade of the twentieth century was a period of great promise and of considerable achievement in drama. With the plays of Bernard Shaw, James Barrie, Granville Barker and Galsworthy in England and those of Synge in Ireland, drama, after the lapse of over a century, became once again something more than mere theatrical entertainment. By 1900 the fight for a new drama had been fought and won. From the turn of the century the drama of ideas could go ahead with confidence, challenging moral and social conventions. Shaw was a force to be reckoned

with. By the time the war came he had become not only the leading playwright, but also a great propagandist for modern ideas of social progress and reform. He had accustomed the English play-going public to be provoked into thinking by a lively and penetrating exposure established views of wealth, the relationship of the sexes, family life, the medical profession, religion and every aspect of life.

James Barrie played on the sentiments. He was satiric and pleaded for economic freedom for women. He would rather soar on the wings of fantasy and enchant his audience to follow him by the dexterity of his theatrical craftsmanship. He usually turned his back on the disagreeable in life. Galsworthy dealt with social problems and his pity was always on the side of the underdog. Each of his plays was a plea for a more Christian approach of class to class and of man to man.

In 1914 the war inevitably checked the development of the drama. Soldiers on leave required relief from reality and relaxation by humour, colour and music and theatrical managers catered for their needs. It was no time for the social themes of Galsworthy and others. At the end of the war Drinkwater's Abraham Lincoln (1918) stood out as a serious play, which provided an inspiration to a people exhausted by war. When the war was over, the serious drama began again. Galsworthy, Barrie and Alan Monkhouse were again with their plays. Bernard Shaw, unchanged in essence but now abandoning his attacks on contemporary social evils, crowned his work in the eyes of the wider public with Saint Joan in 1924. Somerset Maugham came with his plays that cut deeper into life and exposed it with biting satire.

**(a) G.B. Shaw (1856-1950):**

Shaw was born in Dublin. His mother, an amateur singer, supported the family by giving music lessons. The family immigrated to London when Shaw was twenty. He did not have a regular education. He did many odd jobs to earn but could not settle down in any one till late in life. He embraced the cause of socialism and joined the Fabians. As a music critic he advertised Wagner and as a drama critic he popularized Ibsen.

Shaw was one of the greatest dramatists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He has forty odd plays to his credit. Some critics consider him next to Shakespeare in the hierarchy of English dramatists. At the time when Shaw made his debut on the English stage, drama was slowly struggling to rise from its long slumber and inactivity. The period between 1779 and 1876 is dramatically barren. It was Shaw's great contribution that he gave to English drama a new life-force which it had lacked. He made popular not only the drama of ideas and problems, but also prepared the audience ready to accord a hearty welcome to what the dramatists of the new age were intending to give to the public. He revolutionised the whole concept of drama as it was supposed to be in the earlier ages and made it essentially a medium of discussion and reform, rather than pure relaxation and fun. It was Shaw's great achievement that he gave the air of seriousness and purposiveness to drama without sacrificing the element of fun, which the audience hungrily craved for. He gave his philosophic pills a nice sugar coating of joyousness and fun.

Shaw began his career as a drama critic. Later he tried his hand at fiction and wrote five novels: Immaturity (1879), The Irrational Knot (1880), Love Among the Artists (1881), Cachel Byron's Profession and Unsocial Socialists (1883), which failed to achieve the desired success. These were regarded by Shaw as "the novels of my nonage".

The failure of Shaw as a critic and as a novelist brought him to the field of drama. He believed that the stage was the finest instrument for the dissemination and discussion of ideas.

He had powerful and penetrating ideas to offer on a variety of subjects like slum-landlordism, prostitution, natural Christianity, husband-hunting, professional delusions, marriage, paradoxes of conventional society, questions of conscience, Darwinian evolution, Life-force and many more. He fervently and fearlessly set forth his ideas in his dramas and hoped to convert the nation to his way of thinking through the medium of his plays.

Shaw was essentially a satirist like Ben Jonson. The object of his art as a dramatist was to break conventional idols and bring about healthy changes in society. He never bothered about the glorification of art for the sake of art. He subordinated his literary ability to a moral purpose. Shakespeare had borrowed his plots from various sources, but he had never sacrificed the story for the sake of his ideas. But Shaw who is considered next to Shakespeare, paid little heed to the story or the systematic development of plot. The plots of Shaw are loose, and the dramatist introduces scenes in his plays which do not seem to have any vital link with the main thread of the story. His stories dwindle into mere situations and episodes. In his later plays all sense of plot is lost and the dramatist starts talking with the readers. When some critics complained that some of his plays were not plays at all but “dramatized conversation,” he retorted: “A play is anything which interests an audience for two hours and a half on the stage of a theatre.”

Shaw has enriched dramatic literature by creating a variety of characters drawn from all classes of people in society. His characters are representatives of certain ideas. Some of his characters are mere mouthpieces of his theories invented to supply a necessary contribution to an argument, while others are projections of his own personality. Shaw’s portrayal of women is masterly. He invented the modern woman before she discovered herself. He understood women even better than men. His men characters when they are popular heroes, are often pretentious weaklings. He pulls Shakespeare, Napoleon, and Caesar from their pedestals and reveals them as human beings with all frailties of the flesh. There are no conventional heroes or villains in his plays. Like the plays of Galsworthy, the dramas of Shaw hold the audience as the villain.

Shaw is the master of wit rather than emotion. He had the devastating wit of an Irishman with the penetrating logic of a Frenchman. He distrusts emotion and never allows his characters to run into emotional utterances emerging from the heart. His appeal is more to the mind than to the heart. Shaw’s dialogues are brilliant, flashy, sparkling and spontaneous. He is a master of dramatic dialogue. Thoughts can hit like bullets, emotions can explode like shells, and word duel between a man and a woman can be more thrilling than throwing chairs about the room. Widower’s Houses, Arms and the Man, Mrs. Warren’s Profession, Candida, The Apple Cart, St. Joan, Man and Superman, Pygmalion, The Doctor’s Dilemma, The Devil’s Disciple and Caesar and Cleopatra are some of Shaw’s popular plays. Some of his plays have also been made into popular films.

**(b). J.M. Synge (1871-1909):**

Synge was a dramatic genius. He lived among the Western Irelanders and grew to know their life, spirit and speech. Though his sketches contained in The Aran Islands were not published till 1907, they represent his years of apprenticeship to the interpretation of peasant life. He was encouraged by Yeats and turned to playwriting. His one-act play The Shadow of the Glen was produced by the National Theatre, or the Abbey Theatre, as it was afterwards generally called in 1903. This play was hotly resented by the patriots as an insult to the pure women of Ireland. It revealed in its short compass the special qualities of Synge: his sense of the stage, his extraordinary power of dramatising a nation in his characters and his natural command of the substance and

rhythm of prose speech, like a kind of poetry, by its intrinsic beauty. Synge had found at once the style for which Yeats was always seeking. Riders to the Sea (1904), with poor fishermen for its characters, and the commonplace incident of death by drowning as its theme, attains to the dignity of a great tragedy. Synge also wrote some comedies. The Well of the Saints (1905) is more original, racy and imaginative than The Tinker's Wedding (1908). The theme of the play is the restoration of sight to a pair of blind beggars and their final rejection of the doubtful blessing. It is, in every sense, a beautiful invention.

Synge, already famous, became notorious when The Playboy of the Western World was produced in 1907. The patriots found in Synge's characters and incidents an insult to the Irish nation, an attack on Irish religion, a slander on Irish men and an attack upon Irish women. They expressed their disapproval in noisy violence that carried the author's name far into the intelligent world outside. The Playboy is as much and as little of an insult to Ireland as Don Quixote is to Spain. It is at once comedy, satire, tragedy, parable and prose-poem. Like other great plays it delivers general truth in its particular story. The Playboy is a master piece of dramatic art. It exists in itself and for itself as purely as a lyric poem. The career of Synge came to an end with Deirdre of the Sorrows, the third and most memorable of contemporary plays. In it his language has become almost too beautiful. Nothing more could be done with the Anglo-Irish idiom. His brief contribution of six plays made the Irish dramatic movement important not merely to Ireland but to the whole western world. Synge is the early twentieth century's greatest dramatist in the English language.

### (c). Oscar Wilde (1854-1900):

Oscar Wilde was born in Dublin, Ireland. He graduated from Oxford in 1878. In 1879 he went to live in London, where he became the leader of an aesthetic movement. Very soon he became one of the most prominent personalities of the day. His affected paradoxes and his witty sayings were quoted on all sides. He lectured in America, France, Ireland and England. He had a faculty of keeping himself in the public eye.

Oscar Wilde's The Happy Prince and Other Tales appeared in 1888. This charming volume of fairy tale was followed by a second collection of fairy stories The House of Pomegranates (1892). The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891) was the mirror of his aesthetic taste and appreciation of beauty. While in America Oscar Wilde wrote a drama Vera, which was produced in New York. In 1891 his tragedy in blank verse The Duchess of Padua was also produced in New York. But Wilde's first real success with the larger public as a dramatist was with Lady Windermere's Fan (1892), followed by A Woman of No Importance (1893), An Ideal Husband (1895) and The Importance of Being Earnest (1895). The wit and brilliance of these plays helped them to keep the stage. His dramatic success and popularity did not last long. In 1895 he was convicted of a serious moral offence and imprisoned for two years. Oscar Wilde's comedies are extremely clever. Several of his plays were successfully revived on the New York stage in the late 1940s.

His poems: Wilde had already published in 1881 a selection of his poems. In prison he wrote A Ballad of Reading Gaol, a poem of great force, and De Profundis (1905). His Collected Poems, containing some beautiful verse, was published in 1892. While in prison he wrote an apology for his life. His poems are characterized by melody to movement and beauty of thought.

### 4.7.7. Conclusion

One of the most striking features of the history of the novel is the speed with which it has developed in this period. For the first time the novel gains an undoubted ascendancy over all other literary forms. Hardy, Wells, Conrad, James, Galsworthy, and Moore devoted themselves to the problem of the aim and scope of the novelist. James and Conrad evolved techniques which revolutionized the novel. They abandoned the direct loose biographical method in favour of an indirect or oblique narrative. Butler, Wells, and Galsworthy saw the novel as a means of social propaganda. After a hundred years of insignificance, drama again appears as an important literary form, during this period of thirty years. Like the novelists, most of the important dramatists were chiefly concerned with the contemporary social scene. For the first time for many years, poetry is the least significant of the important literary forms.

### 4.7.8. Sample Questions

1. What are the characteristic features of the Age of Hardy?
2. Write an essay on Henry James and Conrad and their contribution to the English novel.
3. What is the contribution of W.B. Yeats to English poetry?
4. Write a note on Synge and Wilde as dramatists.
5. Comment on the achievement of English prose writers during the age of Hardy.
6. How does Thomas Hardy paint the rural and rustic scene?

### 4.7.9. Reference Books

1. Peter Westland, The Victorian Age 1830-1880.
2. George Sampson, The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature.
3. Sir A.W. Ward and A.R. Waller (ed), The Cambridge History of English Literature.

**Dr. Y.S.R. Anjaneyulu**



**Lesson – 4.8****THE MODERN AGE****4.8.1. Objective:**

- i. to introduce various practitioners of different genres and their contributions to the development of literary thought.
- ii. to understand the nature of experimentation in themes and techniques in this period.
- iii. to understand the spirit of the age and how it influenced literature.

**Structure****4.8.2. Introduction****4.8.3 Poetry**

- (a) G.M. Hopkins
- (b) T.S. Eliot

**4.8.4. Other Poets**

- (a) W.H. Auden
- (b) Stephen Spender
- (c) Dylan Thomas

**4.8.5. Fiction**

- (a) James Joyce
- (b) Virginia Woolf
- (c) D.H. Lawrence
- (d) E.M. Forster
- (e) Graham Greene
- (f) George Orwell
- (g) Aldous Huxley

**4.8.6. Other Novelists and Prose-writers**

- (a) Somerset Maugham
- (b) J.B. Priestley
- (c) Evelyn Waugh

**4.8.7. Drama****(a) Christopher Fry****(b) Sean O'Casey****4.8.8. Conclusion****4.8.9. Sample Questions****4.8.10. Reference Books****4.8.2. Introduction:**

The period roughly between 1918 and 1950 was almost completely overshadowed by the two World Wars. In foreign affairs England was preoccupied with problems related to the Treaty of Versailles, the formation of the League of Nations, uncertainty in the Middle East, and troubles in India and Ireland. The General Strike of 1926 resulted in the 'depression' with problems of poverty and unemployment during the thirties. Foreign problems once again came to the fore with the rise to power of the Nazis in Germany and from 1934 until 1939 there was mounting tension abroad. At home there was gradual return to prosperity. The post-War mood was one of gaiety and frivolity. Slowly this gave way to doubt, uncertainty of aim, and a deeper questioning on ethical, social, and political problems, until the outbreak of war in 1939. This was the spiritual temper during this period. The breakdown of established values is perfectly reflected in its literature. Novel, poetry, drama, and miscellaneous prose, all mirror the perplexity and uncertainty of aim which sprang from the post-War breakdown of accepted spiritual values.

The pre-War years had seen a relative eclipse of poetry, and the dominance of the novel and drama as literary forms. Now poetry once again became a vital literary form closely in touch with life. The new poets are Eliot, Auden, C.D. Lewis and Louis MacNiece. Poetry dominated the drama though the novel maintained its primacy. The quest for new values and for a new vital tradition was the desire for new forms and methods of presentation. In all the major literary genres the age produced revolutionary developments.

**4.8.3. Poetry:**

In the twenties and thirties the poetic stage appears crowded. Old poets Hardy, Yeats and Bridges were there commanding respect. Davies and De la Mare were at the height of their popularity. Masfield, in the early twenties, was probably the most widely read poet. Of the war poets Sassoon, Robert Graves and Herbert Read followed their notable, but diverging ways. Alongside the pessimism of Hardy and Housman there were the elder poets Bridges and Binyon to testify to a faith surviving the War undimmed. Bridges had an unshaken confidence that man could use his reason to mould his instincts to a higher way of life. Edith Sitwell had no compromise with the vulgarity of the modern world. Poetic artistry became her life's devotion. Herbert Read retaining his earliest Imagist style, wrote both satire and metaphysics.

The new group of poets came with the aim to cure the Waste Land. Dylan Thomas accepted the Waste Land as the soil from which poetry must be produced. Blunden's quiet volumes

proclaimed his poetic maturity. The group of poets led by Auden had a revolutionary and dynamic poetic creed which the earlier group of Georgians had lacked. They meant poetry to speak in a new language and rhythm. It drew its imagery on modern life and its vocabulary on contemporary speech. They held that it was the duty of poets to take sides in politics and to use poetry to that end, and in politics they stood on the Left. They were determined to use poetry to assist in healing the evils of the wars and the modern civilization. Many of the poets adopted Communism as their faith. Their general attitude was strongly inspired by their reading of Karl Marx.

**(a) G.M. Hopkins (1844-89)**

Hopkins is a unique figure in the history of English poetry. The full recognition of Hopkins's genius came many years after his death. His work was not generally available until 1918, when his friend Bridges published a slim volume of poems culled from his letters and manuscripts. His fine poetry has exercised a great influence on later poets. He is not only the first really great religious poet in English since Milton, but also the creator of an original poetic medium.

Hopkins studied at Oxford and began his lifelong friendship with Robert Bridges. The Oxford of the eighteen-sixties remained a centre of religious controversy and inquiry. In 1866, while still an undergraduate, he was received by Newman into the Roman Catholic Church. In 1868, at the age of twenty-four, he took the decisive step of his life and entered the Society of Jesus. Hopkins had been writing verse since his schooldays. On becoming a priest he burnt all he had written, because he did not want any personal fame. He "resolved to write no more, as not belonging to my profession, unless by the wish of my superiors." He wanted to devote all his intellect and will to the service of Christ. In one of his sermons he said that the poet in him and his works are creatures of God.

Hopkins was deeply moved with the deaths of five nuns in a boat accident in 1875. His rector suggested that someone should write a poem on the subject. Hopkins took the hint and produced The Wreck of the Deutschland, (1875) and on a similar subject, The Loss of the Eurydice (1878). But these poems were not published immediately. A sensuous love of nature based on minute observation, is found in most of his poetry. All Hopkins's poetry springs, directly or indirectly, from his ministry. Some of his finest poetry springs from his "wrestling with my god." He would have been greater as a poet, if he had become an artist or a man of letters instead of a priest. His most important experiment is with 'sprung rhythm', which appeared first in The Wreck of the Deutschland.

Hopkins's poetry is a matter of a mere hundred pages or so. The best of it is infinitely re-readable. He himself described "The Windhover" written in 1877 as "the best thing I ever wrote." It has remained a favourite with many readers, together with The Wreck of the Deutschland and Felix Randal (1880). The best of Hopkins is to be found where he is most simple – simple in structure, though often profound enough in meaning. In such view, such poems as "God's Grandeur," "Spring and Fall" and "The Habit of Perfection" are among the best. The pre-eminently great Hopkins is to be found in his late sonnets, which are profoundly moving.

**(b) T.S. Eliot (1888-1965)**

With the possible exception of Yeats, no twentieth-century poet has been held in such esteem by his fellow-poets as Eliot. During the 1930s his influence was enormous. T.S. Eliot came of on both sides from Puritan families. But he scorned the Puritan and humanist mind. He

expressed it in his early verse and in his later prose writings. In 1915 he settled in England. In his writings, Eliot presented most memorably for us the London of the early nineteen-twenties.

Eliot's first volume of verse, Prufrock and Other Observations, was published in 1917. This was followed in 1919 by Poems. His most impressive achievement up to 1920 came in Ara Vos Pric. This title was taken from Purgatorio. He had been assistant editor of The Egoist (1917-19) and had contributed to it some of the finest of his early criticism, including the famous essay Tradition and the Individual Talent. He founded The Criterion, a literary magazine in 1922 and his poem The Waste Land appeared in The Dial. His first phase of poetic career ends with the publication of Poems 1909-25 (1925). Eliot's poetry is full of quotations from Dante, Shakespeare and the Jacobean dramatists, and from the Bible. Most of the reminiscences of the early poems and The Waste Land point the contrast between the modern world and the ideal heroic world of literature. The Waste Land is clearly the masterpiece of Eliot's first phase.

The second phase of Eliot's poetry began with his joining the Anglican Church in 1927. It is essentially a phase of religious poetry. He declared that he was a "royalist in politics and Anglo-Catholic in religion." In the first phase Eliot was comparatively humanist. The change is first seen coming in "The Hollow Men" and "Journey of the Magi" (1927). The changed manner becomes clear in Ash Wednesday (1930). Four Quartets, a composition of meditative poems, was published as a whole in New York in 1943. In Four Quartets Eliot thinks aloud on a number of problems: problems of national history, including the war; personal problems concerning his development as a poet; the problems the modern poet in general has to face. The poems are closely connected with each other, key phrases being repeated and set in new contexts. The general context, of course, is Christian. Four Quartets, undoubtedly, is the masterpiece of Eliot's second phase.

**His drama:** Eliot made a modest attempt to revive poetic drama. His Murder in the Cathedral (1936), despite its superior points, could not solve the problems of speech in verse. His next play, The Family Reunion (1939) is his most important because it was here that he solved some of the outstanding problems facing him. In The Family Reunion Eliot first worked out the contemporary verse idiom. Afterwards he continued to employ the same, with some minor variations, in The Cocktail Party (1950), The Confidential Clerk (1954) and The Elder Statesman (1958). This is a type of verse in which the rhythm is close to that of ordinary modern English. Eliot found that poetic dramas required more action or movement. In writing The Cocktail Party he tried to keep in mind that in a play, from time to time, something should happen. The problem of dramatic movement in relation to modern verse idiom is one that Eliot has by no means solved. The difficulties are enormous. It is probable that where Eliot has failed, no other poet is likely to succeed.

**His Prose:** Eliot is the greatest critic since Matthew Arnold. His prose style is remarkable for its compact lucidity and expression. Some of his important prose works are The Sacred Wood, Selected Essays 1917-1932, The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, Elizabethan Essays, What is a Classic? etc.

#### 4.8.4. Other Poets:

##### (a) W.H. Auden (1907-73)

Auden's early work seems to put him close to the Marxist camp. He was the poet of unidealized contemporary urbanism, of starving cities, moaning saxophones and talki houses. Auden writes as a peculiarly free agent, easily, restlessly, and voluntarily from style to style and from subject to subject exploring the potentialities of a situation. His principles are essentially liberal and radical. He stresses individual freedom above everything else. He is often spoken of

as “the best of the political poets of the nineteen-thirties”. He has himself made it very plain that he is a Christian poet of the nineteen-sixties. Auden once said: “Every good poem is very nearly a Utopia.”

Auden’s first volume of Poems (1930) was written before he was twenty-five. The amount of plain poetic talent in these makes Auden one of the most intellectually and technically outstanding poets. Paid on Both Sides (1930), and The Orators: an English Study (1932), established him as a poet. Mastery is the key-note of the shorter poems of this period. Their resources are extremely varied, and give the poems their richness and density. One of the most important and persistent elements is the use of the language of psychological analysis, principally Freudian. Auden’s reputation almost certainly rests on the work he produced between 1933 and 1940, the publications of The Dance of Death (1933), Some Poems and Another Time (1940). These poems have intellectual maturity. These six or seven years present Auden’s talent at its most interestingly varied and fertile. Each of these poems faces the division of the two worlds, the “external disorder” and the “narrow strictness,” and attempts with strength and honesty to unite them.

In 1939 Auden left England and became a citizen of the USA. After two years he began to produce poetry. It is explicitly Christian in language and substance. In all his work throughout this period, the aesthetic, the sociological, and the moral or spiritual are closely intertwined. New Year Letter, which was published in 1941, contains the “Letter” itself and also the sonnet sequence “The Quest”. The best parts in For the Time Being (1944) are those in which it is easy to forget the subject and enjoy the feats of rhetoric. Auden’s heavy reliance on the Eliot of The Four Quartets suggests that he could find no other writer to give such direction. With The Age of Anxiety (1948), Auden returns to the local scene, for the greater part of the action occurs in a New York bar, where men meet to have their solitude in common. Each of the works of this decade presents the record of a mind still experimenting and still intensely alive to the potentialities and the disciplines of “the language it loved.”

The dominant impression left by the last ten years of Auden’s work is that of a willed, or accepted, stabilisation. The edition of the Collected Shorter Poems (1950) can be taken to stand as a useful image of stabilisation. Nones (1951), The Shield of Achilles (1955) and Homage to Clio (1960) are the three successive volumes in Auden’s career, which would offer something like a coherent poetical character.

#### 4.8.4. (b) Stephen Spender (1909-95)

Spender had been a life-long propagandist for progressive social causes. He was a reflective lyricist, musing and brooding on the human victims of civilization. His later work proved popular in both verse and prose. Spender was Co-editor of the magazine Horizon in the early forties. In the next decade he started a new magazine Encounter. He was professor of English at University College, London (1970-75). His work as a poet appeared in his first major collection, Poems, (1983).

Spender’s poetry is simple, straightforward and highly musical. He has high appreciation for modern technology and is in praise of the machines and gadgets which make modern life comfortable and enjoying.

#### 4.8.4. (c) Dylan Thomas (1914-1953)

Dylan Thomas heralded a new kind of poetry in the twentieth century. It is different from the realism of Eliot and Auden. Thomas was a romantic poet whose work was devoid of social issues. He was not a social reformer, but took the society at its face value. In an age of impersonality, he was essentially personal. He sang from the depth of his being about life, death, sin, redemption, the natural processes, creation, and decay. Dylan Thomas's poetry is highly lyrical and musical. His early writing was criticized as being obscure. He said that his poetry was rigorously compressed. He described his early work as his "womb-tomb" period. In the opinion of a critic, Dylan's early work was principally concerned with themes of revolt, his middle work with themes and situations of reflection and debate, and his late work with themes of praise and consent.

Dylan Thomas's first volume, Eighteen Poems (1934), brought him an instant reputation. He got further popularity by later books – Twenty-five Poems (1936), The Map of Love (1939), and Deaths and Entrances (1946). His introspective poems are built on a correlation of symbols, showing the strong influence of Freud. His diction and metre are fresh. His Collected Poems (1952) are a reflection of his maturation as a poet. His most popular production, and perhaps in certain humorous aspects his best, is Under Milk Wood: A Play for Voices, commissioned for broadcasting by the BBC. It was published posthumously in 1954 after his sudden death on a lecture tour in the United States. His Letters (1957) to his fellow poet Vernon Watkins give his own views as to what he was trying to do in poetry.

Dylan Thomas is surely the first poet in English literature whose most admired poems are some times difficult to understand. T.S. Eliot has said that, "The minimum requirement of good poetry is that it should have the virtues of good prose." But Dylan Thomas does not have this gift. His reputation has been mainly built on his incomprehensible poems. In England, the main enthusiasts for Dylan Thomas included Edith Sitwell and Herbert Read.

Other important poets are Louis MacNiece, C.Day Lewis and Ezra Pound.

#### 4.8.5. Fiction:

It was around 1920 that the attack on the traditional novel began. New influences had been making themselves felt. The French influence looked with disapproval on the relatively carefree attitude of the traditional English novel. The influence of the Russian novel was in the long run to have a considerably deeper effect than that of the French. The time was ripe for an attempt to revolutionise the English novel.

James Joyce was engaged in a remarkable experiment on the novel, Ulysses in 1922, which was hailed with amazement. Virginia Woolf dealt the traditional novel another blow. Looking at the novels of Bennet, Wells and Galsworthy she found that the reality of life escaped them. In her Mrs. Dalloway and To The Lighthouse, Woolf employed a technique which displayed the inner stream of consciousness, the spirit of life ebbing and flowing. A new kind of novel the subjective novel, had been born in England. Aldous Huxley attracted the rising generation in the twenties. His Point Counter Point melodramatically crowned his scornful analysis of post-war psychology

and manners in the intellectual and artistic classes. Hugh Walpole continued to develop the traditional novel in his generous romantic way. It was a decade in which women novelists made an unusually large contribution. The novel of country life – an aspect of the widespread desire to escape from the pressure of the industrial world, had also gained popularity. The novel of crime and detection came fully into its own. The stories of Sherlock Holmes became popular.

In the third decade the future of the novel seemed to be in the hands of a few young writers; chief among them are Graham Greene, Charles Morgan, H.E. Bates, L.A.G. Strong and Elizabeth Bowen. There was an appearing and disappearing of young novelists without the power to follow up a bright promise. Left wing and Communist theories and contemporary social and economic conditions in the working classes got reflected in the proletarian novel. The 1940s had not witnessed production of great English literature. John Cowper Powys was an outstanding novelist. He applied his imaginative understanding of modern psychology to the portrayal of his characters. Joyce Cary and Angus Wilson revived hopes for a declining genre. C.P. Snow applied himself to the novel with great seriousness and achieved a most impressive sequence of novels.

In the forties there was indeed a strong tendency to use the novel for the exposition of general ideas with regard to the trend of civilization. George Orwell had a grim satiric vision of the future. His Animal Farm was a whole-hearted satire on the post-war menagerie. There also appeared quite a number of war novels during the war. They were in tune with war poetry. While some depicted a sense of unease, frustration and boredom, some naturally wrote rather of the heroism and pathos of war.

#### **(a) James Joyce (1882-1941)**

James Joyce was born in Dublin of Irish Catholic lower-middle-class stock. After leaving England in 1902, he studied Medicine for a while in Paris, where he met Synge and was the first person to read his Riders to the Sea, which he was later to translate into Latin. From 1904 to 1915 he was a teacher of languages.

Chamber Music (1907) was Joyce's first publication. It was a collection of songs. Joyce said to one of his composers: "If I were a musician, I suppose I should have set them to music myself." Later came his Dubliners. It was a book of realistic stories begun in 1904 and rejected by forty publishers. Finally it was published in 1914. The best story in this collection is "The Dead." Then came his first masterpiece, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (1916), written during 1904-14 and first printed in serial form in The Egoist 1914-15. It was appreciated by H.G. Wells, Virginia Woolf and others. In point of style it forms a transitional stage between the realism of The Dubliners and the symbolism of Ulysses. It is a novel in its own right. It can also be regarded as the entrance-hall to Ulysses.

James Joyce started his fiction career with realistic sketches of Dublin and then proceeded with his autobiographical novel. Ulysses was published as a volume in Paris in 1922. For many years it remained banned for obscenity in Britain and the United States. Alfred Noyes was one of the distinguished men of letters who supported the ban. Ezra Pound wrote that Joyce had succeeded in Ulysses in presenting the Average Man. There can be no doubt that this was part of Joyce's intention. Fundamentally, Ulysses is a comic work – using the term "comedy" in its very

widest sense. In fact, there are many incidental passages of comic invention. Joyce himself remarked on one occasion that the book is meant “to make you laugh”. This novel is a sequel to The Portrait, which no one has ever called a comic work. Some critics consider Ulysses as a tragedy: the tragedy of loneliness. In certain respects a comic figure, Bloom is more truly a figure of pathos. He is wretched, not only because his wife is unfaithful to him, but because his son has died in infancy. The novel triumphs partly because of the human theme and partly because of the author’s style.

James Joyce’s other works include Anna Livia Plurabelle (1928), Tales Told of Shem Shaun (1929), Haveth Childers Everywhere (1930) and Finnegans Wake in 1939. To understand Finnegans Wake entirely, the reader needs a mental equipment and a personal life similar to the author’s.

### **(b) Virginia Woolf (1882-1941)**

Virginia was brought up in an atmosphere of culture and intellect. She devoted herself completely to the pursuit of literature. In 1922 she married Leonard Woolf, a man with passion for literature. Mrs. Woolf’s novels are marked by her passion for truth. She wants to know the real meaning of life, the real causes of human actions and behaviour. She was concerned with the destiny and meaning of life. Virginia drew inspiration from Dorothy Richardson, Proust and James Joyce and then worked out her own method. She is known as a good practitioner of the stream of consciousness technique.

“The stream of consciousness novel” is the peculiar product of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This particular kind of novel is also called the novel of subjectivity. The phrase “stream of consciousness” was first used by William James in 1890 to denote the chaotic flow of impressions and sensations through the human consciousness. The rise of the stream of consciousness novel in the early twenties is a reflection of the increasing inwardness of life consequent upon the breakdown of accepted values. Both plot and character in the conventional sense have decayed in the novel of subjectivity. In the words of Virginia Woolf, in the novel of subjectivity there is no plot, no character, no catastrophe, no comedy, and no love interest in the traditional novel. The result is that the stream of consciousness novel has often become incoherent and shapeless, and creates difficulties for the reader.

Virginia Woolf actively participated in politics, especially the feminist movement. She collaborated with her husband in the publication of modernist literature. She got fame with Jacob’s Room (1922). Thereafter she continued the technique of stream of consciousness and produced Mrs. Dalloway (1925), To The Lighthouse (1927), Orlando (1928), The Waves (1931), and Between the Act (1941). Each work is a studied research into the sensibilities of family life and society. Her other characteristic works include the Common Reader (1923), A Room of One’s Own (1929), Roger (1940), and The Death of the Mont (1942).

Virginia Woolf has done much to develop the internal monologue. She looks into other people’s souls, of the complex self-deceiving class and sees more than they themselves can see. She reads their past, present, and sometimes future from chance utterance and stray thoughts. In a collection of short stories, Monday or Tuesday (1921), Virginia Woolf experimented with her fond medium. Some of them are too close to poetry.



**(c) D.H. Lawrence (1885-1930)**

Lawrence was a qualified teacher. He taught till 1913, when he had to resign because of illness. Later he devoted himself to literature. Some of his novels are autobiographical and are based directly on personal experience. His first novel, The White Peacock (1911), was begun when he was only twenty. His second novel is The Trespasser (1912). Both the novels are immature in their performance. The weakness of The Peacock is best seen by contrast with his first masterpiece Sons and Lovers (1913), which is more directly autobiographical. The Morel family in the novel are the Lawrence family only faintly disguised, and the domestic tragedy is very similar to that of the Lawrences in real life. In The Peacock all the “family” characters have taken a step up in the social scale and have lost reality. The White Peacock is romantic and Sons and Lovers is realistic.

A writer of the stature of Lawrence looks for fresh ways to present his maturing experience, and his next novel, The Rainbow (1915) is different from his earlier novels. In comparison with Women in Love (1921), The Rainbow gives a less satisfactory impression. Women in Love evoked different and varied opinions. According to F.R. Leavis, this novel is one of Lawrence’s supreme masterpieces. In any case, Women in Love is Lawrence’s most ambitious undertaking, in which he portrays a wider variety of English life than he had ever done before. The post-War Lawrence is, in general, less impressive than the pre-War. Except The Lost Girl (1920), the remaining novels – Aaron’s Rod (1922), Kangaroo (1923), The Plumed Serpent (1926), Lady Chatterley’s Lover (1928) – all contain admirable things amidst a mass of windy rhetoric. The greatest work of this period is The Man who Died (1931).

Lawrence’s first fiction to be published was in the shape of short stories. He continued to produce stories of varying length during the rest of his life. He also wrote plays, travel books, essays, criticism. He was also a prolific letter-writer, with a wide range of correspondents. His Letters, which form one of the most valuable autobiographies of modern times, were admirably edited by Aldous Huxley in 1932. The story the Letters present, though full of incidental humour, is in essence a tragic one. For Lawrence’s life was an unending and courageous struggle against two things: his own ill-health and the criticism of the public.

Lawrence was also one of the most striking and original poets of the period. He published a good deal of verse throughout his life. Most of it is autobiographical, from Love Poems and Others and Amores (1916) to the satirical Nettles (1930). Among the best of the individual poems are found in the collection Birds, Beasts and Flowers (1923).

**(d) E.M. Forster (1879-1970):**

Forster’s place in literature is as secure as Bertrand Russel’s place in philosophy. He is a representative of the liberal and humanist tradition of the early twentieth century. Forster visited India in 1912 and 1922. Along with others, he started the Independent Review in 1903. In 1920 he was editor of the Daily Herald.

Forster’s reputation is founded on five novels: Where Angels Fear to Tread (1905) The Longest Journey (1907), A Room with a View (1908), Howard’s End (1910) and A Passage to India (1924), his best known work. His novels are known for their subtlety, wit and irony. Forster

deals with the interaction of two types of character, the intersection of two planes of living. In all his novels he brings into conflict those who live by convention and those who live by instinct, those for whom property and propriety, and those for whom personal relationship, are the most important things in life. The world of convention he describes with keen observation and satire, abounds in unforgettable touches of wisdom and humour. In the world of instinct and emotion he is really at home.

Forster's aim is to uncover conflicts of attitude which have never been explicated, which have damaged human life and interfered with honest relationships. In this sense Forster must be regarded as a novelist with a message. In Where Angels Fear to Tread the conflict is between English middle-class respectability and Italian frankness. In Howard's End the collision is between the Wilcox family and the half-German Schlegel sisters who are deeply interested in culture and sensitive to human needs. Forster's motto is "only connect", and the need for cross-fertilization is made plain. A Passage to India explores the difficulty of reaching understanding and full communication between the English and the natives in British India. Forster's short stories are collected in The Celestial Omnibus (1911) and The Eternal Moment (1928). He is best seen as a critic in Aspects of the Novel (1927).

#### **(e) Graham Greene (1904 -1991):**

Of the English novelists born since 1900, Graham Greene is perhaps the most significant. His conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1927 has determined the character of his best work. In Brighton Rock (1938) he makes a study of a teenage delinquent, Pinkie, who runs a gang and commits murder, but he has been brought up as a Catholic and is aware of sin. Greene is especially powerful in distinguishing between the Catholic ethic, which is rooted in the idea of grace and dependence on the sacraments, and humanistic notions of virtue which lack spiritual dimension and supernatural orientation. The clear identification of salvation as open to the sinful man who clings to his faith and at last tries to repent leads to fine and moving pictures like that of the 'whisky priest' persecuted in Mexico in The Power and the Glory (1940). Perhaps Greene's fullest sketch of a Catholic sinner whose sin is tied up with humility, penitence and self-sacrifice that it begins to smack of godliness is that of Scobie in The Heart of the Matter (1948). The protagonist is a District Commissioner of Police in West Africa, desperate over non-promotion. His compassion and sensitivity lead him to adultery. His desire not to injure his mistress or his wife lead him knowingly to take communion unabsolved. Then he kills himself. The implication is that he is more virtuous than the virtuous, and holier than the holy: and it is well done.

Greene leaves one sometimes feeling sorry for the people in his books who manage to be more conventionally decent and get no authorial thanks for it. Greene's style does not draw attention to itself and there is no waste of words. He lays bare the anguish and weakness of human beings on the edge of despair. But, he restores to human experience the status of the contingent. The heart breaks under the eye of God, and it is not just happiness, but salvation, that is at issue.

#### **(f) George Orwell (1903-1950)**

George Orwell, the pen-name of Eric Arthur Blair, was born in Bengal and educated in England. He served for the Indian Imperial Police during 1922-28 in Burma and wrote Burmese Days (1934). He resigned his job on account of his anticolonial views and returned to England.

Later he volunteered to serve in the Spanish Civil War, where he was severely wounded. He came back to England and pursued his literary avocation .

Orwell had a great impact upon the generation of the nineteen-forties. He had observed the prophecies of the American sociologist James Burnham. Orwell said that the prophecies of Burnham are suspect because “at each point Burnham is predicting a continuation of the thing that is happening. As a prophecy Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty-Four (1949) is suspect for the same reason. It assumes that certain aspects of the Soviet regime in 1948, when the novel was written, would set the pattern for the whole world within the next forty years. Furthermore, by including England among the Communist tyrannies of the near future, Orwell was contradicting the observations he had made of the English people in The Road to Wiagan Pier (1937), Inside the Whale (1940) and The Lion and the Unicorn (1941). These are all Orwell’s strikingly original books where he had dispelled the Marxist myth. In Nineteen Eighty-Four all this is suddenly changed and all power is in the hands of a “comrade”. As a prophecy, Nineteen Eighty-Four cannot be taken seriously. As a satire on the contemporary scene, it makes some very good points. Orwell’s greatest novel is Animal Farm (1945). It is a masterly political satire on the Russian Revolution. It has every quality and neatness expected of a novel. It contains one immortal phrase in the slogan, “All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others”.

Orwell is one of those writers who should be read as a whole. He has fifteen books to his credit. His novels, like Chesterton’s and Huxley’s, can best be appreciated if they are read along with his essays, which are substantial in number and quality. Much of his work is autobiographical.

### **(g) Aldous Huxley (1894-1963)**

Huxley came of a good family and was essentially a man of intellect and culture. His early novels are witty satirical studies of the fashionable cultural circles of the 1920s. He casually displayed his erudition and his capacity to give highbrow status to cleverness. The technique owes something to Thomas Love Peacock in its emphasis on the conversation of eccentrics. This is reflected in Huxley’s novel Crome Yellow (1921). Antic Hay (1923) offers the cynical representation of highbrow chatter. Point Counter Point (1928) represents the early vein at its richest. It experiments with the interplay of themes on a musical pattern.

Brave New World (1932) is a fantasy of the future. The year is 632 AF (After Ford). Totalitarian scientific control governs everything from the incubation of babies in bottles to the assignment of each function in society. Culture is suppressed, standardized pleasures are laid on through the contentment media. Hygiene is the supreme moral value.

Huxley’s later work is strongly influenced by successive concern with non-violence and the philosophy of non-attachment, which find a beautiful expression in Ends and Means (1937). His later novel The Perennial Philosophy (1946) is influenced by mysticism and the occult. Practical interest in mysticism sidetracked him into experimentation with drug induced hallucination. Huxley’s struggle between scientific and religious leanings, between physiological obsessions and cultural idealism, is not so much resolved as conducted full-circle.

#### 4.8.6. Other Novelists and Prose Writers

The short story was a late development in England. Until about 1890 it had only a casual existence as the occasional by-product of a novelist. Anthony Trollope and Mrs. Gaskell were among the first to write a few self-contained short stories. In the twentieth century Maupassant and Chekhov had strong influence on the English short story. It became an important and popular literary form from the originality of Kipling and Wells. The most dynamic contributions to the Genre came from D.H. Lawrence and James Joyce.

It was in the 1920s that the short story came fully into its own. Then a writer could make himself known entirely as a short story writer, as did A.E. Coppard and Katherine Mansfield. The public had come to recognize the pleasurable existence of the form. Wells, Galsworthy, Edgar Wallace and Somerset Maugham contributed largely to the widespread vogue of the short story. The trinity of diction, mystery and horror made the most spectacular advance in public favour. Such stories provided some escape from the monotonous drabness of industrialized civilization. It appealed rather to the younger readers than to their elders and to the literary rather than to the average reader.

The publishing of short stories was facilitated by the appearance of more periodicals and magazines. In the thirties the writers of short story rivalled the new poets in exciting activity. There were also many volumes of collected short stories. It showed that regional inspiration had passed from the novel to the short story.

##### (a) Somerset Maugham (1874-1965)

Maugham was qualified as a doctor before turning to writing. There is a clinical detachment in his study of human character and a surgical precision in ironic judgment. There is an element of authorial involvement and commitment in his narrative. Much of Maugham's work is autobiographical. His experiences as a medical student are recorded in his first novel, Liza of Lambeth (1897). His most famous novel Of Human Bondage (1915) records his early life. The hero's crippled foot was, symbolically, Maugham's speech impediment.

Several of his novels and shorter pieces are reprinted almost annually. The Moon and Sixpence (1919), the story of an artist, was based on the life of Paul Gauguin. "Miss Thompon" which was included in a collection of short stories, The Trembling of a Leaf (1921), was made into a play. Ashenden, or The British Agent (1928) was drawn from the author's experiences as an intelligence agent in Switzerland during World War I. Cakes and Ale or The Skeleton in the Cupboard (1930) is a satirical story of two men of letters, who are often said to be Thomas Hardy and Hugh Walpole. In 1938 Maugham published an account of his literary experiences, The Summing Up.

##### (b) J.B. Priestley (1894-1984):

Priestley had published a number of volumes of essays and criticism before The Good Companions (1929), a novel which brought him immediate fame. Like many of his later novels, it was made into a play and a film. The next novel Angel Movement (1930) was more realistic. English Journey (1934) and Let the People Sing (1939) were his successful novels. Wartime

novels included Blackout in Gretley (1942) and Daylight on Saturday (1943). His novels after the war were The Olympians (1949), Festival (1951), and The Magicians (1954). He also wrote several film plays. He also wrote some mystery stories. Priestley had a good deal of the essayist in his make-up as a novelist. All his essays are enriched by allusions drawn from his wide reading. Priestley was also a successful playwright. Some of his successful plays were Dangerous Corner (1932), Laburnum Grove (1934), They Came to a City (1943), An Inspector Calls (1946).

### (c) Evelyn Waugh (1903-66)

Evelyn Waugh, like Graham Greene, was a Roman Catholic convert. He made his name as a satirical novelist, scathing in his representation of upper-class types. He spiced his narration with cartoonery and farce.

The picture of life in a bad private school in Decline and Fall (1928) is riotously funny. In it ironies are cheerfully pushed beyond the bounds of plausibility. Waugh's later work is more serious. The distrust of modern values grows and it is mixed with contempt. The Catholic leaning is linked with nostalgia for aristocratic culture in Brideshead Revisited (1945). An upper-class Catholic family chronicle is unfolded retrospectively when Captain Ryder is posted on wartime duty to the former family of his friends, the Marchmains. The sense of institutional Catholicism is strong in Waugh. A code of militaristic chivalry is aired sometimes at the expense of the benighted products of modern egalitarianism. Waugh's service in the army in the second World War was the basis of his war trilogy, Men at Arms (1952), Officers and Gentlemen (1955) and Unconditional Surrender (1961).

### 4.8.7. Drama:

There came forward a new generation of playwrights, outstanding among whom were T.S. Eliot, Noel Coward and Sean O'Casey. The characters created by Noel Coward, pitiful seekers after a good time, drinking and flirting to ward off boredom, were in their own persons a sufficient criticism of the post-War futility. Sean O'Casey, the outstanding dramatist of the twenties was a worthy successor to Synge. His background was the slums of Dublin, crowded noisy tenements where women quarrelled and loafers drank and the tragic violence of civil war has ever at hand.

The nineteen thirties saw the appearance of J.B. Priestley and James Bridie. Priestley wanted to present ideas about life, to wake up his audiences to the possibilities of their altering their lives for the better, and to suggest that human life can be a fuller and finer thing than it normally is. James Bridie was a more truly original dramatist than Priestley. His great characteristics were his versatility, his wide, lively intellectual interest and his power of holding an audience by his stagecraft even when they were baffled by his ideas. He fashioned drama with the clash of ideas and personalities.

The most interesting development in the drama of the 1930s was in poetic drama. It was with Murder in the Cathedral that T.S. Eliot turned to drama proper and achieved an austere masterpiece, promising the development of dramatic power. Like The Rock (1934), Murder in the Cathedral was written partly in verse and partly in prose. It was followed by The Family Reunion (1939) and The Cocktail Party. Part of Eliot's difficulty in expressing himself in dramatic form was in the need of finding a verse medium. Eliot himself said: "Anyone who tries to write poetic drama

even today should know that half of his energy must be exhausted in the effort to escape from the constricting toils of Shakespeare". Now Eliot had successfully created his medium – verse without any specifically poetic language or rhythm, fit for prosaic contexts.

The Second World War inevitably checked the possible emergence of new dramatists and new developments in drama. It was a great thing that the theatres survived during the war period. Priestley and Bridie continued to write. The drama began to receive some help from the state after the war through the Council for Encouragement of Music and the Arts, which in 1946 became the Arts Council of Great Britain. Christopher Fry made poetic drama an exciting theatrical entertainment after the war. One Act plays dealing with various themes have also become popular in the fifties.

### (a) Christopher Fry

After T.S. Eliot, Christopher Fry has given the biggest stimulus to the poetic drama. The achievement of Fry is both technical and comprehensive. He could conceive plot, situation and dialogue in the way that excited an audience. His verse was born for speech, rising and falling, alive with wit and vivid with imagery. To Fry life was a joyous miracle.

His pre-War play, The Boy with a Cart (1939), chronicles the life of a Cornish saint who has lost his father and who pushes his mother about in a cart until he finds a place to fulfil his aim and build a church. The poetry extends the implications of persistent faith and church building. A Phoenix Too Frequent (1946) tells the story of a young widow who is religiously resolute on starving herself in the tomb of her husband till a young soldier reasserts for her the power of light and life. The contrast between life and love on the one hand, and sophisticated disillusionment on the other, is the theme of The Lady's Not for Burning (1949), the play which established Fry with the theatrical public. The setting is medieval. Thomas Mendip is determined to be hanged for murder, though there has been no crime. What restores his resolve to live and his sense of purpose is the encounter with a young woman who has been seized on a charge of witchcraft and is to be burnt.

The spring-like mood of The Lady's Not for Burning is in contrast with the autumnal mood of Venus Observed (1950). The Duke of Altair is a middle-aged widower determined to put an end to a life-time's philandering by marrying one of his many past sweethearts. The aid of his son is invited for the selection of his new 'mother'. Three contestants are due, the Venus, Juno and Minerva of the competition. The surprise arrival of one, Perpetua, focuses the Duke's attention elsewhere and for the first time puts the son in active rivalry with father. There is more individuality in the psychological studies in this play than in its predecessors. The symbolic searching of the heavens, through a 'phallic' telescope, is delicately linked with the Duke's probings of other would-be 'heavens'. His observatory is equipped with a bed and serves a double purpose. The Firstborn (1946) is a sombre study of Moses and his vocation at the time of the Egyptian plagues. A Sleep of Prisoners (1951), an anti-War play, is tragic in tone.

### (b). Sean O'Casey (1880-1964)

The next milestone in the literary history of the Abbey Theatre, after W.B. Yeats, is Sean O'Casey. His Juno and the Paycock was put on in 1924. The action takes place in a Dublin

tenement against the background of the Civil War Free Staters and Republicans in 1922. The play is a rich tapestry of action and emotion. The sharp contrasts between human worth and worthlessness in confronting disaster comprehend both the humorous and the tragic. The Plough and the Stars (1926) shows the cost of fanatical nationalism in the violence it generates. The background is the 1916 rising. We see men moved to bloodshed by patriotic rhetoric which appeals more to vanity than to good sense, and the consequent suffering is agonizing.

O'Casey's relationship with the Abbey Theatre came to an end in 1928 when Yeats turned down his more expressionist play, The Silver Tassie. The play is a harrowing exposure of the damage trench warfare in France. The play experiments with non-naturalistic dialogue and presentation. After this disappointment O'Casey became an exile in England. O'Casey's later plays tended to be overlaid with symbolism for Marxist propaganda purposes. But he returned to a more authentic personal subject in Red Roses for Me (1943), where the setting is once more Dublin. Autobiographical memories are exploited and the hero seems to be a self-portrait. Of the six books of autobiography with which O'Casey occupied his later years, it is generally agreed that the fourth, Inisfallen, Fare Thee Well (1949) is the most interesting.

O'Casey did not directly preach. He gave his characters their own lives, which seem predestined from within and not by their creator. In general they are crude, pitiable, weak, comic characters speaking a rich lingo of the Dublin slums. He began to mix symbolism with his realism, to rely less on story and to employ a literary speech as well as the rich dialect of his Dublin slums.

#### 4.8.8. Conclusion:

As we can see from the above account, the novel still maintained its supremacy among literary forms. The disillusionments, cynicism, despair, and bewilderment in face of the crumbling of established moral values which characterize post-War world are clearly seen in the novel. The master of the pre-War novelists was Henry James; of the inter-War years the most significant writer was James Joyce. The novel became more loose, more fluid, and less coherent; in technique we see the development of the 'stream of consciousness', interior monologue and an allusive style. The science of psychology (through Sigmund Freud's works) had done much to deepen and enrich the study of human character in the novel. D.H. Lawrence, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf were among the major writers whose work reflects strongly the influence of modern psychology.

The mood of disillusionment and despair was reflected in the poetry of the post-War period. There were developments in poetic technique. The new poets turned to free verse because of the influence of Hopkins. Much of the poetry of the period is difficult. The poets like Auden and Dylan Thomas sought a solution to the world problems in psychology and politics. A quest for stability marked poetry of this period. In drama there is a movement away from realism. There is a revival of poetic drama which illustrates the dissatisfaction with realism and the tradition of naturalistic prose dialogue. Surrealism and expressionism were the other developments in literature of this period. Later on because of technological advances, space exploration and the threat of nuclear and germ warfare, there has been a tremendous increase in science fiction.

### 4.8.9. Sample Questions

1. Write an essay on the development of poetry in the first half of the twentieth century.
2. Write an essay on the development of short story of the twentieth century.
3. Discuss the major novelists of the Modern Age.

### 4.8.11. Reference Books

1. A.S. Collins, English Literature of the Twentieth Century.
2. W.W. Robson, Modern English Literature.
3. George Sampson, The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature.

**Dr. Y.S.R. Anjaneyulu**



## Lesson-4.9

# GEOFFREY CHAUCER AND EDMUND SPENSER

### 4.9.1. Objectives:

The aim of this lesson is to:

- acquaint the student with the works of Chaucer and Spenser.
- familiarize the student with Chaucer's poetry, style and technique.
- make the student familiar with the themes of Spenser's sonnets.

### Structure

#### 4.9.1. Objectives

#### 4.9.2. Introduction

#### 4.9.3 Geoffrey Chaucer

#### 4.9.4. His Life and Works

#### 4.9.5. Discussion of his works

#### 4.9.6. Edmund Spenser

#### 4.9.7. His Life and Works

#### 4.9.8. Discussion of his works.

#### 4.9.9. Glossary

#### 4.9.10. Conclusion

#### 4.9.11. Sample Questions

#### 4.9.12. Reference Books

### 4.9.2. Introduction:

The fourteenth century is remarkable historically for the decline of feudalism, for the growth of the English national spirit during the wars with France, for the prominence of the House of Commons and for the growing power of the labouring classes who had till then been in a condition hardly above that of slavery. The literary movement of the age clearly reflects the stirring life of the times. The age produced five writers of significance: Langland, voicing the social discontent, preaching the equality of men and the dignity of labour. Wyclif; the greatest of the English religious reformers giving the Gospel to the people in their own tongue, and the freedom of the Gospel in unnumbered tracts and addresses; Gower, the scholar and literary man criticizing this vigorous life and plainly afraid of its consequences; and Mandeville, the traveller, romancing about the wonders to be seen abroad. Above all there is Chaucer, a scholar, traveller, business man, courtier, sharing in all the stirring life of his times, and reflecting it in literature as no other but

Shakespeare has ever done. His poetry is remarkable for its variety, its story interest and its wonderful melody. Chaucer's works and Wyclif's translation of the Bible developed the Midland dialect into the national language of England. Outside of England the greatest literary influence of the age was that of Dante Petrarch, Boccaccio, whose works then at the summit of their influence in Italy, profoundly affected the literature of all Europe.

The age of Elizabeth is generally regarded as the greatest in the history of English literature. Historically, there is tremendous impetus received from the Renaissance, from the reformation, and from the exploration of the new world. It was marked by the strong national spirit, by patriotism, by religious tolerance, by social content, by intellectual progress and by enthusiasm. Such an age of thought, feeling and vigorous action finds its best expression in the drama, and the wonderful development of the drama culminating in Shakespeare is the most significant characteristic of the Elizabethan period. Though the age produced some excellent prose works it is essentially an age of poetry. The poetry of this age is remarkable for its variety, its freshness, and its youthful and romantic feelings. Both the poetry and the drama were permeated by the Italian influence, which was dominant in English literature from Chaucer to the Restoration. Edmund Spenser, Michael Drayton, Thomas Sackville, George Chapman, Phillip Sidney are the noteworthy poets of this age.

### 4.9.3. Chaucer:

Chaucer has been called 'The Father of English poetry'. He was influential in the formation of Standard English language during the Middle English period. He was the first to teach the art of English versification and breathed a cosmopolitan spirit into English Literature and linked it up with the intellectual movement of the Continent. His love of nature, dramatic method, satire, humour and command of pathos are noteworthy. Critics have described the music of his verse as being melodious, smooth, unerring and golden-tongued. The richness in colour of his description is well illustrated in his introduction to *The Prologue*. His contemporaries acknowledged his genius. The years in which Chaucer wrote were a critical period for the English language. That is why the language employed by Chaucer retains many traces of the French influence.

### 4.9.4 His Life and Works:

Geoffrey Chaucer was born in 1340. His childhood was spent in London, on the Thames Street near the river. At about 14, he became a page in the household of the King's daughter-in-law, the Duchess of Clarence. He went with the King's army to France and there he was captured by the French. He was held as a prisoner of war until ransomed on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1360. Major works of Chaucer are *The Romaunt of the Rose*, *Dethe of Blanche the Duchesse better known as the Boke of the Duchesse*, *The Complaynte unto Pite*, *An A.B.C.*, *A Prayer to The Virgin*, *Troilus and Criseyde*, *The House of Fame*, *Legend of Goode Wimmen (unfinished)*, *Parliament of Fowls*, *The Canterbury Tales*, and *Prologue to Canterbury Tales* and so on. It is customary to divide the works of Chaucer into three periods – The first is that of French influence for thirty years (until 1372), of Italian influence for fifteen years (1372-1385) and of English influence for fifteen years (1385-1400). These convenient divisions, however, are not to be accepted too rigidly, since the chronology of Chaucer's writings is mostly conjectural.

**Period of French influence (until 1372):** When Chaucer first began to write, translations from the French were still popular, and he was only following the prevalent fashion when he set himself to translate Jean de Meung's *The Romaunt of the Rose*. Modern scholarship, however, definitely

denies to Chaucer the existing translation as a whole and allows only a very doubtful probability that a part may be his. ***The Book of the Duchess*** (1369) is a poem of more than 1300 lines in octosyllables. It is a dream allegory traditionally accepted as a lament over the death of the Duchess of Lancaster, first wife of John of Gaunt. The poem gives evidence of skillful dialogue, occasional pathos, and definite originality. The much shorter ***Complaint unto Pity*** has for its special interest the first appearance in English of the seven-line stanza, which held the premier position for serious verse in English poetry until dethroned by Spenser.

**Period of Italian influence (1372-1385):** During his several diplomatic visits to Italy, not only did Chaucer improve his knowledge of Italian, but he also brought back with him the works of Dante and Boccaccio, the influence of which is predominant in his work for the next thirteen years. ***Troilus and Criseyde*** (1372-1384) is Chaucer's best example of sustained narrative, and has been frequently recognized as the first great poem in English; yet, the piece is too long. It has too many digressions, and there is too much talk and too little action. In ***The Parliament of Fowls*** (1377-1382) Chaucer honours the betrothal of Richard II to Anne of Bohemia. Although the structure of this marriage poem is slight, the details are worked out with charming humor and lightness of touch characteristic of the poet. As one critic has put it, 'it is the poem in which we meet the true Chaucerian qualities'. ***The House of Fame*** (1379-1384) is a reversion to the octosyllable; a dream allegory, it exhibits a full command of the metre and a rich skill in ironic humour. However, it apparently failed to satisfy the author, since he left it unfinished and did not use the octasyllabic couplet again. For the substance of ***The Legend of Good Women*** Chaucer has precedents in two of his favourite authors, Ovid and Boccaccio; a dream-poem of some 2700 lines, it told the stories of famous and unhappy ladies of old, such as Cleopatra, Thisbe and Philomela. The stories are handled with a mastery that Chaucer did not excel till he came to write ***The Canterbury Tales***.

**Period of English influence (1385-1400):** In ***The Legend of Good Women***, Chaucer was endeavouring to find a thread by which to link together a succession of stories. This literary form is oriental in origin, (e.g., ***The Arabian Nights***, ***The Seven Wise Masters***) and had previously been adopted by Boccaccio in his ***Decameron***. It was most successfully used by Chaucer in his major poem of this period, ***The Canterbury Tales*** (1387-1400). With this work, we reach, for the first time in the history of English literature, the kind of artistry that belongs to the same world as the writings of Shakespeare and Dickens, since the best of ***The Canterbury Tales*** can be enjoyed by the people who enjoy ***The Tempest*** and ***The Pickwick Papers***. Other poems written by Chaucer during this last period are only of minor importance.

#### 4.9.5. Discussion of his works:

**The Canterbury Tales:** Chaucer's ***Canterbury Tales*** is the greatest work of the English period. Chaucer borrowed the idea for his ***Tales*** from Boccaccio's ***Decameron***. It is a collection of stories, secular and sacred, which were popular in the Middle Ages. A company of some thirty persons, while lying at the Tabard Inn in Southwark on the eve of a three-to-four day pilgrimage to the shrine of Thomas Becket at Canterbury, accept the offer of Henry Bailly to show them the way. They also approve the Host's suggestion that, to while away the journey, each pilgrim shall tell two tales on the sixty-mile ride to Canterbury and two on the way back; and the best story-teller is to be given a supper by the rest on the return to Tabard. Only twenty-four of the contemplated 120 tales are told by twenty-three pilgrims. Chaucer assigned to a pilgrim a tale suited to his character and vocation. The tales are of astonishing variety and give us a true and faithful picture of various aspects of medieval life in England. Stopford A. Brooke remarks: "The tales themselves take in

the whole range of the poetry and the life of the middle ages: The legend of the saint, the romance of the knight, the wonderful fables of the travelers, the coarse tale of common life, the love story, the allegory, the animal fable, and the satirical lay.”

**Troilus and Criseyde:** *Troilus and Criseyde* is Chaucer’s best example of sustained narrative, and has been frequently recognized as the first great poem in English. Yet the piece is too long. It has too many digressions and there is too much talk and too little action. For *Troilus and Criseyde* Chaucer goes straight to Boccaccio’s *Philostrato*. But though the poem is set against the conventions of courtly love, Chaucer breathes a new spirit and significance into it, far transcending the scope of the original.

In *The House of Fame* as well as in *The Legend of Good Women*, Chaucer undertook the task of constructing a work which would constitute a setting for a group of tales. *The House of Fame* is a dream allegory which exhibits a full command of the metre and a rich skill in ironic humour. For *The Legend of Good Women* Chaucer has precedents in two of his favourite authors, Ovid and Boccaccio. It is a dream poem of about 2700 lines. It told the stories of famous and unhappy ladies of old, such as Cleopatra, Thisbe and Philomela.

**The Prologue :** The sketches of the various pilgrims contained in *The Prologue* are regarded as the most graphic picture of typical figures of fourteenth century England. It is a work of character sketches ranging from the Knight to the Plowman. The pilgrims are drawn as individuals as well as types. The stories cover nearly the whole ground of medieval poetry. According to J.L.Lowes: “Persons of every sort and condition represented in ‘The Prologue’ had been intimately known to Chaucer through years crowded with experience and observation....Dialogue and action, gesture, costume, and scenery, as in real life—all are here. Long before Balzac, Chaucer conceived and exhibited the Human Comedy.”

#### 4.9.6 Edmund Spenser:

Though Spenser regarded Chaucer as his master, their writings have nothing in common. Like Chaucer, Spenser was a busy man of affairs and he studied the classics and contemporary French and Italian writers. Chaucer looks about him and describes life as he sees it, but Spenser looks backward for inspiration and lives dreamily in the past. His first quality is imagination but not observation. While reading Chaucer, we think chiefly of his characters but while reading Spenser we chiefly think of the beauty of expression. The beautiful ‘Spenserian stanza’ and the rich melody of ‘Spenser’s verse’ made him the model of all modern poets. His life and work seem to centre around three great influences:

- (i) Cambridge, where he grew acquainted with the classics and the Italian poets.
- (ii) London, where he experienced the glamour and the disappointment of court life.
- (iii) Ireland, which steeped him in the beauty and imagery of old Celtic poetry and first gave him leisure to write his masterpiece.

#### 4.9.7. His Life and Works:

Spenser was born in East Smithfield. His education began at the Merchant Tailor’s School in London and continued in Cambridge. He read the classics and made acquaintance with the great Italian poets. He wrote countless little poems. His ambition was to express the dream of

English chivalry, much as Aristo had done for Italy in *Orlando Furioso*. After leaving Cambridge, Spenser went to the north of England, on some unknown quest. Here his chief occupation was to fall in love and to record his melancholy over the lost Rosalind in the *Shepherd's Calendar*. He met Sidney and many of the Queen's favourites.

In 1580, Spenser was made the secretary to Lord Grey, the Queen's deputy in Ireland. He accompanied his chief through one campaign of savage brutality in putting down an Irish rebellion. He was given a big estate. His life here was lonely. After sixteen years residence, he wrote his views of the state of Ireland. In Kilcolman, Spenser finished the first three books of *The Faerie Queene*. Raleigh visited him and heard the poem with enthusiasm and hurried the poet to London and presented him to Elizabeth. The first three books met with instant success. Elizabeth conferred fifty pounds as early pension to Spenser. Later he went to Ireland where he fell in love with Elizabeth, an Irish girl and wrote *Amoretti* or *Sonnets* in her honour. In 1594 he married Elizabeth celebrating his wedding with his *Epithalamion*, one of the most beautiful rhymes in any language.

In 1595 he visited London and published *Astrophel*, an elegy on the death of his friend Sidney and three more books on *The Faerie Queene*. After his return to Ireland, Spenser was appointed Sheriff of Cork, a queer office for a poet. In the same year the Tyrone rebellion broke out in Munster and the rebels attacked the palace of the poet. Spenser barely escaped with his wife and two children. This was a shock to him from which he never recovered. He returned to England heart-broken and in the following year 1599 he died in Westminster.

#### 4.9.8. Discussion of his works:

**The Faerie Queene:** Spenser's fame chiefly rests on his great work *The Faerie Queene*. It is the brightest expression of the morality of the time, and in a sense is the epic of the English race at one of the great moments of its history. The original plan of the poem included twenty-four books, which was to recount the adventure and triumph of a knight. Spenser wrote only six books, each of twelve cantos and a fragment of the seventh; the first is given to the Red Cross Knight who represents Holiness; the second to Sir Guyon or Temperance; the third to Britomart, or Chastity; the fourth to Cambel and Triamond, or Friendship; the fifth to Sir Artegall, or Justice; the sixth to Sir Calidore, or Courtesy. These knights are dispatched on their various quests by Gloriana, 'queen of fairy land'. In the course of their adventures appears from time to time the perfect knight, Arthur, who is himself in search of a fairy queen. The thread of the narrative is frequently interrupted by episodes. For this poem he invented a new verse form called the Spenserian stanza. It is in nine lines, eight of five feet each and the last of six feet, riming ababbcbcc.

**The Shepherd's Calendar:** *The Shepherd's Calendar* is a series of twelve pastoral poems or eclogues. The eclogues are poems of pastoral life in which shepherds were the speakers, rural in nature and love their usual themes. The poet might introduce matter personal to himself or his friends or might even discuss political affairs, but he kept the conventional framework. The poems of *The Shepherd's Calendar* show great variety in metre. To increase the rustic effect, Spenser uses strange forms of speech and obsolete words to a great extent. This is the first published work of Spenser. It is noteworthy at least in four respects:

- (i) It marks the appearance of the first national poet in two centuries.
- (ii) It shows again the variety and melody of English verse which had been largely a tradition since Chaucer.

- (iii) It was the first Pastoral in English which exerted a strong influence on subsequent literature.
- (iv) It marks the real beginning of the outburst of great Elizabethan poetry.

Some other noteworthy poems of Spenser are *Mother Hubbard's Tale*, a satire on society, *Astrophel* an elegy on the death of Sydney; *Amoretti* or sonnets, to his Elizabeth; the marriage hymn, *Epithalamion*, and four *Hymns*, on love, beauty, heavenly love and heavenly beauty. There are numerous other poems and collections of poems which show the scope of his work and are worth reading.

**Epithalamion:** Legouis has termed *Epithalamion* as the 'most gorgeous jewel' in the treasure house of the Renaissance. The Renaissance poet or scholar showed a great zeal and interest in the dynamism of human personality and in the passion for life. *Amoretti* and *Prothalamion* and *Epithalamion* are the outcome of the lyrical proficiency of Spenser. Spenser met Elizabeth Boyle in Ireland. Elizabeth became the poetic soul of *Amoretti* and furrowed every line of the 88 sonnets. This love became the permanent bond of wedlock between the two. *Epithalamion* is a poetic ornament presented by the bridegroom of heart to the delicate feeling of the bride of love. Ornaments of gold and silver would have been only worldly presents or gifts and Spenser would not have tolerated worldly gifts from him to his beloved. *Epithalamion* is really the most gorgeous jewel in the treasure house of Renaissance. It is a personal song with a universal appeal. It is an idealization of his own marriage with Boyle. It is romantic but nowhere do we find the lack of seriousness. Nowhere do we see the gay atmosphere of frivolity. The bride is always shy and modest. The Christian ceremony of marriage is done in a serious way. Nowhere has Spenser been rash or recklessly hasty. He is patiently serious. He can do nothing without the implied prior blessings of his deities. All mythology is banished to make room for a purely Christian ceremony. When the holy priest blesses the bride, she does not smile back in response to admiration shown by others. She fully invests herself into the seriousness of that solemn ceremony. The poem draws our attention toward the Platonic conception. This automatically gives seriousness to the poem. Plato's conception of the ideal, the beautiful and the good has well been delineated in the form of Elizabeth Boyle's bridal charm.

**Prothalamion:** *Prothalamion* is the last poetic twinkle of the wick of feelings in the clay-lamp of emotionalism burning in the heart of Spenser. It is his swan song, a memorable close to his distinguished poetic career in the annals of English literature. It is a before-marriage song, the record of a meeting, a figment of what he himself calls 'spousal verse'. It relates more to those who were going to be married. The title of the poem suggests the occasion of the poem which was, "The double marriage of two honourable and virtuous ladies, the lady Elizabeth and the lady Catherin Somerset, daughters to the Right Honourable, the Earl of Worcester and a spouse to the two worthy gentlemen M. Henry Gilford and William Peter, Esquires." According to the dates recorded in history, the date of these marriages was 18<sup>th</sup> November, 1596. As the poem is a 'before-marriage poem', it may have been composed a month or two prior to this date. The whole poem is cast into the irregular Italian Canzone. He uses the Canzone with exquisite grace in *Prothalamion*.

**Four Hymns:** This is written in a honour of love and beauty. It shows Spenser's wonderful power of melodious verse. Plato's influence is clearly felt on the Hymns. Spenser saw earthly beauty, and especially the beauty of woman, which inspires love, as the token and reflection of divine beauty, virtue rendered visible. These hymns show a strong sense of colour and minute details in the word painting of the bodily charms of maidens. Spenser presents love as the civilizer of mankind.

**Miscellaneous Poems: (Complaints)** In 1591 Spenser collected his smaller poems, most of which seem to be early work and published them. Among them *Mother Hubbard's Tale* is written somewhat in the manner of Chaucer. It is a remarkable satire on society, on the evils of a beggar soldiery, of the Church, of the court and of misgovernment. He views the society pessimistically. Other poems of this group are: *The Ruins of Time*, *The Tears of the Muses*, *The Fate of the Butterfly* and so on.

#### 4.9.9. Glossary:

1. pathos: the power of a situation, piece of writing, work of art or person to cause feelings of sadness, especially because of sympathy
2. conjectural: the forming of a guess about something based on how it seems and not on proof
2. prevalent: existing very commonly or happening frequently
3. couplet: two lines of poetry next to each other, especially ones which rhyme and have the same length and rhythm
4. artistry: great skill in creating or performing something, such as in writing, music, sport
5. transcend: to go beyond, rise above or be more important or better than something, especially a limit
6. melancholy: sadness which lasts for a long period of time, often without any obvious reason
7. fragment: a small piece or a part, especially when broken from something whole
8. knight: a man given a rank of honour by a British king or queen because of his special achievements, and who has the right to be called 'Sir'.
9. Savage: extremely violent, wild or fierce
10. Pastoral: describes a piece of art, writing or music that represents the pleasant and traditional features of the countryside
- 12 obsolete: not in use any more, having been replaced by something newer and better or more fashionable

#### 4.9.10. Conclusion:

Chaucer, who is labelled as 'the morning star of the Renaissance' responded readily to the influence of Italian humanism and it is through him that its free secular spirit first expresses itself in poetry. His descriptions of the country are in the conventional manner of his time. He individualizes his characters to make them a gallery of living portraits of his time.

Spenser has been happily called 'the poet's poet'. He is also called the 'second father of English poetry'. He gave to England and her poets, 'pride and confidence, the fervour of conviction and faith.' In his own day he influenced a large number of verse writers, of more or less power. No poet in any age or climate had a richer and fuller sense of sensuous loveliness than he, or a more masterly command of the resources of rhythmic music and pictorial phrasing, such as would reveal this loveliness in words. His is a rich ornate imagination. The most significant testimony to the greatness of Spenser lies in the power he wields over versifiers so alien in imaginative vision as Dryden and Pope.

**4.9.11: Sample Questions :**

1. Consider Geoffrey Chaucer as the first English poet.
2. Write a note on Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.
3. Discuss briefly Spenser's The Faerie Queene and Shepherd's Calendar.
4. Write about the characteristic features of Elizabethan Age.

**4.9.12. Reference Books:**

1. William Henry Hudson: ***An Outline History of English Literature.***
2. W.W.Lawrence: ***Chaucer and The Canterbury Tales.***
3. David Daiches: ***A Critical History of English Literature.***
4. Albert C. Baugh, : ***A Literary History of England.***
5. Sampson, George: ***The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature.***
6. Legouis.E and Cazamian. L: ***A History of English Literature.***
7. William J.Long: ***English Literature.***

- P.Nagasuseela



**Lesson - 4.10.****CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE AND  
ALEXANDER POPE****4.10.1. Objectives:**

The objectives of this lesson are to:

- acquaint the student with the works of Marlowe and Pope.
- familiarize the student with Marlowe's style and dramatic technique.
- to have a comprehensive and critical outlook of Pope's satire.

**Structure of the Lesson**

- 4.10.2. Introduction**
- 4.10.3. Christopher Marlowe**
- 4.10.4. His Life and Works**
- 4.10.5. Discussion of his plays**
- 4.10.6. Alexander Pope**
- 4.10.7. His Life and Works**
- 4.10.8. Discussion of his works.**
- 4.10.9. Glossary**
- 4.10.10. Conclusion**
- 4.10.11. Reference Books**
- 4.10.12. Sample Questions**

**4.10.2. Introduction:**

The years 1580 to 1640 are considered as wonderful years in the history of English literature. England found herself, at the beginning of this period, quickened by the most potent influences, which can affect the life of a nation: wide-spread intellectual curiosity, the beginnings of an intense religious ferment, and the pride of suddenly discovered national strength. The young 'wits' who came up from the universities to London bubbling with excitement, seized upon the popular drama, and were able to develop drama into a form of art concrete enough, flexible enough, exciting enough, to satisfy the people of the age. The Elizabethan drama has been called the 'drama of the rhetoric'. The dramatist was compelled to a far greater degree to rely upon vivid poetic expression as the chief means of stimulating the imagination of his audience. During the late 80s of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Lyly was at the height of the vogue. At this period a group of young dramatists were coming to the front and their appeal was not to the court but to the people. The most important of these dramatists were Christopher Marlowe, Robert Greene and George Peele. Greene was by natural gift a prose romancer, Peele, a lyric poet, and at least half of Marlowe's genius was of an epic kind. But the tendency of the age was so strong in favour of drama that all the three were diverted into the channel of dramatic expression.

The term classic refers to the writers of the highest rank in any nation. In literature it was first applied to the works of the great Greek and Roman writers, like Homer and Virgil; and any English book that followed the simple and noble method of these writers was said to have a classical style. Every national literature has at least one period in which an unusual number of great writers are producing books, and this is called the classical period of a nation's literature. The age of Louis XIV is the French Classical age, and the age of Queen Anne is often called the Classical age of England.

The Elizabethan writers were led by patriotism, by enthusiasm, and in general, by romantic emotions. They wrote in a natural style, without regard to rules. Their works are delightful because of their vigour and freshness and fine feeling. In the following age patriotism had largely disappeared from politics and enthusiasm from literature. Poets no longer wrote naturally, but artificially. And this is the general character of the poetry of the Puritan Age. Writers rebelled against the exaggerations of both the natural and the fantastic styles. They demanded that poetry should follow exact rules; and in this the French writers influenced them. The general tendency of literature was to look at life critically, to emphasize intellect rather than imagination. This is what is often meant by the classicism of the ages of Pope and Johnson. The classic movement had become *pseudo-classic*, i.e., false or *sham classicism*; and the latter term is now often used to designate a considerable part of the eighteenth century literature. To avoid this critical difficulty, critics have adopted the term Augustan Age, a name chosen by the writers themselves, who saw in Pope, Addison, Swift, Johnson, and Burke the modern parallels to Horace, Virgil, Cicero and all that brilliant company who made Roman literature famous in the days of Augustus.

#### 4.10.3. Christopher Marlowe (1564-93):

The period of Elizabeth is generally regarded as the greatest in the history of English literature. It was marked by a strong national spirit, by patriotism, by religious tolerance. This age is an age of poetry which is remarkable for its freshness and variety.

#### 4.10.4. His Life and Works:

Marlowe was born in Canterbury, only a few months before Shakespeare. He was the son of a shoemaker but with the help of a generous patron he was educated at the town grammar school and then at Cambridge. When he came to London in 1584 he has the ideals of renaissance which later found expression in *Dr. Faustus*. Marlowe became an actor and lived in a low-tavern atmosphere of excess and wretchedness. When he was twenty-three years old, he produced *Tamburlaine* which won him instant fame. In five years, while Shakespeare was serving his apprenticeship, Marlowe produced all his great work. He was stabbed in a drunken brawl.

In the brief prologue to *Tamburlaine*, Marlowe not only announced the character of the play but also stated his future program:

*"From jiggling veins of rhyming mother wits  
and such conceits as clown age keeps in pay  
we'll lead you to the stately tents of war  
where you shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine  
threatening the world with high astounding terms  
and scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword."*

For “jigging vein” he proposes to substitute blank verse, which, though it had been employed since the example of Sackville and Norton in *Gorboduc*, had not fully established itself. Because of Marlowe’s artistic insight, he recognized the value of blank verse for dramatic poetry. By the last three lines quoted above he foreshadowed his plan of giving unity to his dramas by making them resolve around some single great personality, engaged in some titanic struggle for power. The major works of Marlowe are *Dr. Faustus*, *The Jew of Malta*, *Edward II*, *Tamburlaine the Great* and *Hero and Leander*.

#### 4.10.5 Discussion of his plays:

*Tamburlaine* is a pure “hero-play”. The Scythian shepherd conquers, one after another, the kingdoms of the east, forcing kings to harness themselves to his chariot, and carrying with him a great cage in which a captive emperor is kept like a wild beast. The huge barbaric figure of Tamburlaine is always before our eyes, and the action of the play is only a series of his triumphs. His character, half-bestial, half-godlike in its remorseless strength and confidence, dominates the imagination like an elemental force of nature, and lends itself admirably to those “high astounding terms” which fill all the pages of the play.

*Doctor Faustus* is Marlowe’s second work. It is also a hero-play, but it is written on more subtle lines. It is a tragedy of damnation. It is the story of Faustus, a great scholar, who surrenders his soul to the Devil in return for sovereign knowledge and power, and who is thus able for twenty years to satisfy his appetites. An immortal soul is a heavy price to pay for the miserable inadequate rewards, which are shown in the course of the play. What is dramatized with the most intensive poetic imagination is not the aspiration of Faustus but his agony of guilt and loss. It embodied, in another form, the same aspiration after the unattainable which *Tamburlaine* had tried, and the story involved large questions of human will and fate. The whole organization of the play expresses a bitter acceptance of tragedy. Envisaging a world of power and delight, he turns his longing eyes on magic books that will make him a mighty God and ultimately damn him forever.

The Doctor of Divinity seals his own damnation when he signs in his own blood the deed by which he gives his blood and soul to the devil. This is the beginning of the process of Faustus’ inevitable damnation. Now Faustus is a spirit in form and substance. However, he is not cut off from forgiveness. Yet the effects of his sin in turning away from God make it almost impossible for him to accept God’s mercy. Repentance is all that is needed. But to his horror he realizes that he cannot repent.

As the end of the stipulated period of power and pleasure draws nearer, Faustus is increasingly aware of the emptiness of his bargain with the devil and of the reality of his damnation. Even now he may beg for God’s mercy and avoid damnation. Instead of withstanding the momentary agony, he seeks comfort in Helen’s beauty and commits the sin of demoniality. Now there is no hope of obtaining God’s forgiveness. Nevertheless, Faustus seeks to escape damnation at all costs. As the terrible end approaches, he becomes more and more aware of eternal damnation and passes into it with a piteous shriek ringing through darkness.

Marlowe’s third play is the *Jew of Malta*. It is a study of the lust for wealth, which centres around Barabas, a terrible old money-lender. The hero is a Machiavellian villain. To amass riches and win power, he is ready to commit any crime against friends, allies, his country and even his daughter. When the Governor of Malta, obliged to pay tribute to the Turkish Grand Seignior,

decides to collect it from the Jews of the land, Barabas refuses to submit to the decree. His entire wealth is thereupon confiscated and his house turned into a Christian convent. The crafty Jew, who has hidden part of his treasure in the foundation of his house, persuades his daughter, Abigail, to fetch this by pretending to be converted to Christianity and thereby entering the convent. In his desire for revenge he brings about the death of the governor's son and plots against the governor and the Christians of Malta. His evil deeds provoke Abigail to return to the convent, and the enraged father poisons her and all the inmates of the convent by sending them poisoned porridge. In her last breath Abigail discloses everything to Friar Jacomo. When the Turks come to Malta for the tribute, the governor defies them, and this is followed by a siege of the island.

Pretending to become a convert, Barabas gets into the good books of the Friars, kills one of them and cunningly gets Friar Jacomo accused of the crime. Ithamore, tempted by a strumpet called Bellamira, promptly poisons them both with a bouquet of flowers. Before their death, they expose him to the governor, and Barabas is imprisoned. By counterfeiting death the Jew escapes from the city and helps the Turks in the siege. As a reward he is made the governor of Malta. He now turns against the Turks and offers to help the Maltese for a substantial price. He invites the Turkish commander and his army to a banquet at the governor's palace where he has planned a collapsible floor with cauldrons of burning liquid underneath. The Jew is himself betrayed in the end and perishes in the trap he has set for the Turks.

That he should end his life horribly as a result of his becoming the victim of a plot designed for an enemy may seem the resurgence of the moral order. The first part of the play is well constructed, showing a dedicated advance, but the last part is an accumulation of melodramatic horrors. Barabas is checked in his murderous career by falling into a boiling cauldron which he had prepared for another, and dies blaspheming, his only regret being that he has not done more evil in his life. The play leaves the impression of a world where moral values have no place.

Marlowe's growth in dramatic technique is still more strikingly apparent in his last play, **Edward 11**. This is unquestionably his masterpiece. So far as play-making goes though for the very reason that it discards rhetorical monologue for the rapid dramatic interchange of thought, it contains fewer quotable passages of pure poetry than any of any others. **Edward II** served as a kind of textbook for a nation curious as to its past, and seeking therein lessons for its future guidance. Unlike his earlier plays, **Edward II** "is polished in form, sustained in theme and consistent in characterization". Here we find subordinating beauty of language to effective dramatic presentation. Marlowe introduced a group of dominant characters instead of the two central characters of his earlier plays. The play begins with the recall by King Edward II, on his accession, of his favourite Gaveston from exile. The nobles of the land rise against Gaveston and execute him. A rift soon develops between the King and his Queen Isabella. Abetted by her paramour, Mortimer, she rebels against the King who, being routed, is forced to flee to Ireland. Heady with the triumph, Mortimer captures Edward, forces his abdication and imprisons him in Killingworth Castle, where he is subsequently tortured to death by one of Mortimer's hirelings.

In the earlier part of the play, **Edward II** appears indifferent to the welfare of the state, ineffectual, willful and a wanton seeker of the pleasures. Gaveston's plans to captivate the king by masques, comedies and indecent shows, do not paint a flattering picture of Edward's character. His exuberant love for Gaveston, his vacillations, tantrums, and neglect of his wife, alienate our sympathies. The change in fortune which brings about his capture at Neath alters our attitude towards him. Till then the only redeeming feature about him was his genuine affection for Gaveston.

Marlowe concentrates in the second half of the play on the sufferings of the King, making us forget his misrule and misbehaviour. At the same time he shows us the misdeeds of the Queen and Mortimer. Our sympathies are drawn towards the King and away from the Queen who earlier suffered from his neglect, and from Mortimer, a leader at one time, for a movement to save England from the King's irresponsible favourites. Their Machiavellian villainy is contrasted with the King's long drawn sufferings and horrible death. That Mortimer's head should be placed on the murdered king's hearse at the end of the play is grisly. But it relieves the readers and spectators to some extent of the horror they have felt at the savage and barbarous regicide.

Marlowe was killed in 1593, at the age of twenty-nine. He sums up for us the renaissance passion for life, sleepless in its search and daring in its grasp after the infinite in power, in knowledge, and in pleasure.

#### 4.10.6. Alexander Pope: (1688-1744):

Pope is in many aspects a unique figure. In the early 18<sup>th</sup> century there were few lyrics, no love poetry, no epics, and no dramas of songs worth considering. But in the field of satiric verse Pope was a great master. He dominated the poetry of his age. Many poets looked at him as their model. He was the only writer of his age who devoted his whole life to literature. Pope had no other profession than literature. Pope was deformed and dwarfish both in body and soul. He was lacking in noble feeling, and instinctively chose a lie when the truth had manifestly many advantages. Yet this waspish little man became the most famous poet of his age.

#### 4.10.7. His Life and Works:

Pope was born in London in 1688. His parents were Catholics and they settled in Binfield. Pope passed his childhood here. By reason of the sweeping laws against the entrance of Catholics into public service he was shut out from the ordinary career of Englishmen, in parliament, the church or the army. Pope received very little school education but browsed among English books and picked up a smattering of the classics. When only 16 years of age he had written his *Pastorals*, a few years later appeared his *Essay on Criticism*, which made him famous. With the publication of *The Rape of the Lock*, Pope's name became popular. Led by his great success, Pope returned to London and for a time lived a merry life but as he was utterly unsuitable to it, soon retired to Twickenham. There he gave himself up to poetry, developed a little garden and cultivated his friendship with Marthablount. Here he wrote his moral epistles and revenged himself upon all his critics. He died in 1744 and was buried at Twickenham.

For convenience, we may separate Pope's work into three groups:

- (i) *Pastorals, Windsor Forest, Messiah, Essay on Criticism, Eloise to Abelard, and The Rape of the Lock*
- (ii) *Translations of Homer*
- (iii) *Dunciad and the Epistles, Essay on Man, Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot.*

#### 4.10.8. Discussion of his works:

**Essay on criticism:** The *Essay on Criticism* sums up the art of poetry as taught first by Horace, then by Boileau and the eighteenth century classicists. Though written in heroic couplets, we hardly consider this as a poem but rather as a storehouse of critical maxims such as "for fools rush in where angels fear to tread"; "to err is human, to forgive is divine"; "a little learning is a

dangerous thing”—these lines, and many more like them from the same source, have found their way into our common speech, and are used, without thinking of the author, whenever we need an apt quotation.

**The Rape of the Lock:** *The Rape of the Lock* is a masterpiece of its kind, and comes nearer to being a “creation” than anything else that Pope has written. The occasion of the famous poem was trivial enough. A fop at the court of Queen Anne, one Lord Petre, snipped a lock of hair from the abundant curls of a pretty maid of honor named Arabella Fermor. The young lady resented it, and the two families were plunged into a quarrel which was the talk of London. Pope, being appealed to, seized the occasion to construct, not a ballad, as the Cavaliers would have done, nor an epigram, as French poets love to do, but a long poem in which all the mannerisms of society are pictured in minutest detail and most delicate wit. The first edition, consisting of two cantos, was published in 1712, and it is amazing now to read of the trivial character of the London court life at the time when English soldiers were battling for a great continent in the French war. Its instant success caused Pope to lengthen the poem by three more cantos; and in order to make a more perfect burlesque of an epic poem, he introduces gnomes, spirits, sylphs, and salamanders, instead of the gods of the great epics, with which his readers were familiar. The poem is modeled after two foreign satires: Boileau’s *Le Lutrin* (Reading desk), a satire on the French clergy, who raised a huge quarrel over the location of the lantern; and *La Secchia Raptia* (Stolen bucket), a famous Italian satire on the petty causes of the endless Italian wars. Pope, however, went far ahead of his masters in style and in delicacy of handling a mock-heroic theme, and during his lifetime *The Rape of the Lock* was considered as the greatest poem of its kind in all literature. The poem is still well worth reading; for as an expression of the artificial life of the age— of its cards, parties, toilettes, lapdogs, tea-drinking, snuff-taking, and idle vanities—it is perfect in its way as *Tamburlaine*, which reflects the boundless ambition of the Elizabethans.

**Pope’s Translations:** The fame of Pope’s *Iliad*, which was financially the most successful of his books, was due to the fact that he interpreted Homer in the elegant, artificial language of his own age. Not only do his words follow literary fashions, but even the Homeric characters lose their strength and became fashionable men of the court. So the criticism of the scholar Bentley was the most appropriate when he said, “it is a pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but you must not call it Homer.” Pope translated the entire *Iliad* and half of the *Odyssey*; and the latter work was finished by two Cambridge scholars, Elijah Fenton and William Broome, who imitated the mechanical couplets so perfectly that it is difficult to distinguish their work from that of the greatest poet of the age.

**Essay on Man:** The “*Essay*” is the best known and the most quoted of all Pope’s works. Except in form it is not poetry, and when one considers it as an essay and reduces it to plain prose, it is found to consist of numerous literary ornaments without any very solid structure of thought to rest upon. The purpose of the essay is, in Pope’s words, to “vindicate the ways of God to Man”; and as there are no unanswered problems in Pope’s philosophy, the vindication is perfectly accomplished in four poetical epistles, concerning man’s relations to the universe, to himself, to society, and to happiness. The final result is summed up in a few well-known lines:

*All nature is but art, unknown to thee;  
All chance, direction which thou canst not see;*

**Miscellaneous works:** *The Dunciad* (i.e. the “Iliad of the Dunces”) began originally as a controversy concerning Shakespeare, but turned out to be a coarse and revengeful satire upon

all the literary men of the age who had aroused Pope's anger by their criticism or lack of appreciation of his genius. Though brilliantly written and immensely popular at one time, its present effect on the reader is to arouse a sense of pity that a man of such acknowledged power and position should abuse both by devoting his talents to personal spite and petty quarrels. Among the rest of his numerous works the reader will find Pope's estimate of himself best set forth in his ***Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot***, as a strange mixture of vanity and greatness; "The Universal Prayer" shows at least that Pope had considered, and judged himself, and that all further judgment is considered superfluous.

#### 4.9.9. Glossary:

undisputed	:	If something is undisputed, everyone agrees about it (certainly, without any doubt)
genius	:	very great and rare natural ability or skill, especially in a particular area, such as science or art
overwhelming	:	To cause someone to feel sudden strong emotion
renaissance	:	a new growth of activity or interest in something, especially art, literature or music
epistle	:	one of the letters written to the early Christians by the apostles (= the first followers of Jesus Christ)
remorseless	:	severe and showing no regret or guilt.
epigram	:	a short saying or poem which expresses an idea in a way that is clever and amusing.
Epic	:	A poem or book which is long and contains a lot of action, usually dealing with a historical subject.
Vanity	:	pomp and show.
maxim	:	a brief statement of a general truth, principle or rule for behaviour.

#### 4.9.10 Conclusion:

Marlowe has been called the father of English Dramatic Poetry just as Defoe is termed the father of English fiction and Chaucer the father of English narrative poetry. Marlowe, with his instinct for selecting certain scenes that best impress the imagination and those similes that strike, has most effectively made of the drama a thing of beauty. The proof of his originality and artistic instinct is that he discarded the classic convention for the romantic. He found the drama crude and chaotic; he left it a great force in English literature. Marlowe was a contemporary to Shakespeare. In his prologue to the play ***Tamburlaine***, Marlowe stated his future program. ***Dr. Faustus, Tamburlaine, the Great, The Jew of Malta*** and ***Edward II***, are the important plays of Marlowe. They are full of violent scenes and magnificent pieces of poetry. He paved the way for later dramatists. Blank Verse attained perfection in the hands of Marlowe. The Renaissance spirit is clearly visible in his works.

In the field of satire and didactic verse Pope was a great master. He dominated the writers in his age and many writers looked to him as their model. ***The Rape of the Lock*** is his masterpiece.

His literary career can be divided into three periods in which he wrote many types of poetry from odes and pastorals to satires and philosophical poems. ***The Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, The Dunciad, Essay on Man*** and the translations of ***Iliad*** and ***Odeyssey*** are the important works of Pope. Pope may be said to be 'the master of literary mosaic'. There is nothing of the easy breadth and vigour of Dryden in his satirical verse. Moreover he excelled his predecessor in exquisite finish and in detailed touches. His poems have no solidarity or homogeneity except for ***The Rape of the Lock***. His translation of Homer's ***Iliad*** is far more interesting. In the narrow fields of satiric and didactic verse, Pope was the undisputed master. His influence completely dominated the poetry of his age. Many foreign writers and English poets looked to him as their model. He was a remarkably clear and adequate reflection of the spirit of the age in which he lived.

#### 4.9.11. Sample Questions:

1. Write a note on Marlowe as a dramatist.
2. Discuss the theme of ***Dr.Faustus***.
3. Evaluate Pope as a Satirist.
4. Examine the reflection of society in the works of Pope.

#### 4.9.12. Reference Books:

1. Albert C. Baugh, ***A Literary History of England***.
2. George Sampson, : ***The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature***
3. Legouis.E and Cazamian. L: ***A History of English Literature***.
4. William J.Long: ***English Literature***.
5. W.H. Hudson: ***A Short History of English Literature***.

- P.Gopichand



## Lesson - 4.11

# John Keats and Charles Dickens

### 4.11.1. Objectives :

- (i) This lesson makes you understand about the lives and works of John Keats and Charles Dickens.
- (ii) The discussion part will provide you with more information about the contribution of Keats and Dickens to English literature.

### Structure of the lesson.

- 4.11.2 Introduction
- 4.11.3 John Keats
- 4.11.4 Keats : His Life & Works
- 4.11.5 Discussion
- 4.11.6 Charles Dickens
- 4.11.7 Dickens : His Life & Works
- 4.11.8 Discussion
- 4.11.9 Conclusion
- 4.11.10 Sample Questions
- 4.11.11 Reference Books

### 4.11.2. Introduction:

Romanticism in Europe has been a movement of great complexity. The multiplicity of meanings which the term evokes makes it very difficult to define. It has often been used synonymously with the word 'Romantic' to mean any of the following : emotional, fanciful, imaginative, ornamental, attractive, stupid, unreal, selfless, exuberant, adventurous, passionate and so on. The origin of the word Romanticism dates back to the 'Romance' tradition of the Middle Ages. It is popularly believed that the actual origin of the Romantic Movement as we know it today started in Britain. Whether this is true or not, the fact remains that the English version of Romanticism showed a clear shift of feeling and sensibility. The attitude to nature and its order also changed. The predominantly British version of the movement can be seen in its incipient form even in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, especially, in Thomson's Seasons, Gray's Elegy, Macpherson's Ossianic poetry, to name a few. In these poets, the concern with death and decay, burial grounds and broken castles brings out a melancholy and sentimental strain that has earned them the name 'Graveyard School of Poetry.' It is through this early, specialized movement that Romanticism reached the Continent.

Some of the features of the 18<sup>th</sup> century version of Romanticism in England are – greater interest in nature, a primitivist attitude and concentration on natural, pre-civilization ways of life, interpreting human mental states according to the changes taking place in nature, subjectivizing the natural world, working towards acquiring spontaneity in reflection and action especially in the expression of this thought, preoccupation with external nature in depicting scenery, especially wild and untamed scenes of nature, and popularizing the vogue of the Noble Savage.

In this age, the most important name is that of Rousseau. His contribution to the period preceding the actual Romantic Movement is tremendous. The main figures who have been labeled as Romantics in English literature are some of the most famous poets such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, Byron and the novelist Sir Walter Scott.

The Romantic Movement as an important literary era is supposed to begin formally in the year when Wordsworth and Coleridge published their Lyrical Ballads (1798) and it came to a close apparently with the passing away of Sir Walter Scott in 1832. This was the time of simultaneous literary, economic, political and social revolution in England. Therefore, the movement is paralleled with a revolutionary temper and the age is also called the “Age of Revolution”.

Keats’s romanticism, on the surface level, is a compound of all the familiar elements. He rejects the present actual world as ugly and painful and escapes into the myths and legends of the distant past. He escapes into the past, feels it alive before him, through the palpable activity of his imaginative faculty. Imagination is, in this sense as much a source of joy to him as it is to Wordsworth and Shelley. Then, his love of nature’s variegated charm is also a familiar feature of the romanticism of the early nineteenth century.

The age of Dickens, the age in which his powers matured was an age of suffering, of conflict, as well as of expansion and progress. As a result of the Industrial Revolution, there was the rise of the great Capitalist class as a new force in national life. The rural population was uprooted, and there was a rush to the cities in search of higher wages and better conditions of living. This rich grew richer while the poor suffered untold misery. This is seen in the frequent rioting of the factory workers who smashed machinery, and who were ultimately put down by force. Their poverty is reflected in the passing of the poor Laws and the enormous expansion of the workhouses. The suffering of the poor was further aggravated by the failure of crops over a number of years. This gave rise to the Corn-law struggles. There are frequent glimpses in the novels of Dickens of all this misery of the poor. Thus from Oliver Twist we can form a complete idea of the evils of the workhouses and the consequent suffering of the poor.

One important aspect of this suffering, which is frequently reflected in the novels of Dickens, was the employment of little children in English factories and mines. These little children were made to work for as many as thirteen hours a day. The economic law of Laissez Faire, free supply and demand held the day, and any interference with the individual freedom of contract was regarded as immoral and unjust. The labourers were free to send their children to work, and the factory owners were equally free to employ them. The entire story of children’s employment is a story of cruelty and avarice.

Dickens has associated himself with the suffering childhood, more especially with the sorrow and suffering of the Victorian London child. He well knew the pathetic suffering of the children employed in mines and factories. In his novels, as in David Copperfield, through vivid

pictures of their suffering, he has tried to awaken the conscience of an age remarkable for stupidity and heartlessness in the treatment of its poorer children. It was an age several degrees coarser, harsher and more cruel than our own. In the most impressionable years of his life, the hanging of old and young, men and women, regularly served as one of the entertainments of the Londoners. Prison laws were cruel; the criminals were kept in hulks where they were brutally treated, almost like animals.

Religious hypocrisy and snobbishness were widespread. In his novels, Dickens lashes at hypocrisy of every kind, and the snobbishness and indifference of the rich towards the poor is frequently emphasized. Dickens knew that much suffering is due to hypocrisy, ignorance and tyranny, and in one novel after another his aim is to arouse the sympathy of his readers for this suffering and he does so both by moving them to tears and to laughter. Dickens took for his field the obscure, lower life of the city of London. He was an avowed satirist and as such, no doubt, he is sometimes guilty of over emphasis and partiality.

In the age of Dickens, grotesqueries and eccentricities were more common both among the high and the low, but more especially among the lower classes, than they are today, and this is reflected in the countless odd characters of Dickens' novels. The general harshness of the age is also seen in the cruel treatment meted out to children at school. Education was mainly in private hands. There were private academies which also provided board and lodging to the young students. The food given to them was meagre and unwholesome as the academies were run for profit. The boys were mercilessly thrashed for the least offence.

Dickens also reflects the social system of the day in which wealth and birth were considered more important than merit. The aristocracy was proud of its blue blood, and dubbed even the rising merchant class as upstarts. The capitalists in their turn were proud of their wealth and looked down upon the poor.

#### **4.11.3. John Keats:**

"More than any other writer of the age, Keats seems to be a poet born. He has more gusto, more ability to focus several sense impressions on one item, so as to give a rounded, rich apprehension of it. His instinctive command of emphatic imagery and a wider range of synaesthesia give greater capacity for conveying his vision as a sensuous experience. His conflicts, thus, find expression at a more substantial level than those of any contemporary poet. Keats has too much integrity to turn away from the actual world and reality. All his greatest poetry is an imaginative expression of this conflict... both his letters and poems were comments on the allegory of his life and the whole life was a struggle to resolve the conflict between the ideal and the actual, between poetry and poet. It was his profound sense of kinship with suffering humanity and his sensuous love of beauty which made Keats into a great poet. Keats only achieves his best and purest work when he falls back from the grandiose strivings. He was faithful to his own experience and that superbly endowed with the sensuous equipment of a poet continued to seek truth.

#### **4.11.4. Keats: His Life & Works:**

There is a good reason why students studying John Keats's poetry must be aware of the life of the poet. The reason is that, Keats created poetry directly out of his own passionately throbbing and yet physically crippled life. All lyric poetry is subjective; all romantic poetry emanates

from, and is related to, the poet's private self. This preoccupation with self is common with Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats and Byron. The poetry of these poets is apparently "a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." But essentially there are sharp distinctions. Keats's life has been an untiring search for the identity of his own self, the experiencing, suffering, enjoying, self; and his poetry is a record of this search. Eventually, in the case of Keats, his life and his poetry become one. As a man, he craved for the life of sensations; as a poet he rendered the sensations into verse.

Born in 1795, in the city of London, the son of a poor stable keeper, John Keats was the eldest of five children – four brothers and one sister. He was educated along with his brothers, George and Tom, at a private school at Enfield. His father died soon after. He was passionately devoted to his mother, tenderly nursed her during her severe illness in 1810, and was broken-hearted when she died of consumption the same year. Thus Keats became an orphan at the tender age of fifteen. Keats is a major Romantic poet who gave up an honorable and satisfying career in order to devote his life to poetry. He is traditionally considered to be a poet who appeals to the senses. Keats was the last to be born and the first to die among the Romantic poets. He lived for less than 26 years. He was born at the Swan and Hoop livery stables between Finsbury and the London Wall and died in the Piazza di Spagna in Rome in 1821. This meagre stretch of life witnessed the unfolding of one of the most remarkable and awesome geniuses of English literature.

Spenser was the catalyst who brought the talent of the nineteen-year-old Keats to the forefront. It was Spenser's Faerie Queene that evoked his poetic genius to manifest itself. Keat's poetic genius exposed him both to bitter criticism and high praise. He received extravagant praise from his friends. In his personal life, Keats had to face many problems. Consumption, a deadly disease in those days, claimed the lives of his brother and mother. He himself fell a victim to this dreaded malady. His love for his brothers George and Tom was very deep and self-sacrificing. He nursed his dying brother Tom devotedly. His love affair with Fanny Brawne, was perhaps the most tragic in literary history. In spite of all this, Keats never gave into self-pity, but always faced the challenges of life bravely. Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley and others were all nature poets, though distinct from each other in their approach to nature. Nature constituted a philosophy of life to these poets: Wordsworth was a pantheist; Shelley was intellectual in his approach while Keats brought out the sensuous qualities of nature in his poetry. The sensuous pleasures described in the poetry of Keats are their own end. They appeal to pure sensations and Keats responds powerfully to these. He submits completely to these pleasures. This is what is termed as the sensuousness of the poetry of Keats. For Keats, the joy, the beauty and the truth lie in the nature around him. Keats' Odes give the reader an abundance of this sensuousness.

In 1815 Keats wrote a number of sonnets and lyrical pieces including A Hymn to Apollo and one longer piece, The Epistle to George Felton Matthew. These are adolescent compositions, but unusually rich with suggestions of sensuous beauties of nature. They also reveal his early fascination for the ancient Greek legends and myths. In 1816 Keats wrote many more pieces mature and more self-assured. Of the poems composed in 1816, two stand out for different reasons: the sonnet, On first looking into Chapman's Homer and Sleep and Poetry. In a sense, both constitute a manifesto of Keats' aesthetic vision. I stood Tiptoe is said to be a record of the poet's factual impressions in close contact with nature. The above mentioned pieces comprise the first volume of Keats's poetry. This was followed by Endymion which was published in 1818. This was the beginning of the chain of events which led to the most untimely death of the poet.

From 1818 to 1820 was a period of crushing troubles and tribulations for Keats, but this was also the most productive period too. The 1820 volume of Keats's poems contained Isabella, the first version of Hyperion, The Eve of St. Agnes, the great odes : Ode to Psyche, Ode to Melancholy, Ode to the Nightingale, Ode on a Grecian urn, Ode to Autumn and the poems, Lamia and La Belle Dame Sans Merci. It was during this period that he wrote Otho, the Great, a poetic drama, The Eve of St. Mark, and the second version of Hyperion.

#### 4.11.5. Discussion:

Keats' earliest attempt at verse was the Limitations of Spenser written when he was eighteen years old. Of a different quality was the next volume, called Endymion, published in 1818. It is a long narrative poem in four volumes dealing with the Greek Myth of the love of the Moon Goddess Cynthia, for a Greek youth Endymion. It is for the first time that in this poem the Keatsian style comes to full flowering. It has a rich and suggestive beauty obtained by a richly ornamented diction. Its first line is oft quoted, and it contains the theory that Keats followed during the whole life of his poetic career.

‘A thing of beauty is a joy forever  
its loveliness increases’

The third and last volume of poetry was published in 1820. This volume contains the best of Keats. Isabella or The Pot of Basil (1818), narrates the story taken from Boccaccio, of the cruel murder of a lady's lover by her two brothers. The style is deeper in tune and the poet exercises greater self - control. The tale has been told with an economy and precision which the poet had never shown before. Its numerous passages of rare beauty justify the praises it has received.

Hyperion was begun in 1818 and its style was largely modelled on the style of Paradise Lost. Here the poet takes up the epic theme of the ancient struggle between the older race of Gods such as Hyperion and Saturn and the younger ones as Appolo. Besides having countless passages of divine beauty, the poem also shows that the poet has acquired full control over structure and style. The Eve of St. Agnes (1819) tells the tale of elopement of two romantic lovers, Porphyro and Madeline. It is the best narrative poem of Keats. The poem is remarkable for its manifold beauties of description, imagery and colour. It has countless highly sensuous word pictures. The Eve of St. Mark has the fine pictorial quality, but the material has been handled with greater restraint. Its style is effortless. La belle Dame sans Merci is a kind of lyrical ballad. It breathes the air of medieval mystery and romance. While the Eve of St. Agnes is Keats' study in well - placed and triumphant love, this exquisite ballad deals with the hopeless passion of a knight for a fairy, such as was Keats' own love for Fanny Brawne. Lamia was written in 1819. It tells the story of a youth named Lycius, a serpent woman. The metre used is heroic-couplet and the style is close to Dryden. The story is the best constructed of all Keats' narratives and some of the descriptions are wonderful pieces of imagination. The poem remains an admirable example of sustained narrative . The Fall of Hyperion, a Dream (1819) shows a deeper insight into life and its problems. It has a more thoughtful tone than any of his earlier poems. Keats' concern with life is something new and unusual.

The 'Great Odes' are the finest fruits of his maturity, they represent Keats at his best. All the characteristic qualities of his poetry find full and vivid expression in them. As has been well

said, "Shelley's genius finds perfect expression in the lyrics, Keats's genius in the Odes". Keats' Odes are always in the form of an address; their theme is exalted and dignified and their style equally elevated; their splendour of imagery and fine phrases is matchless; their length is sufficient for their thought and their development is marked by clarity and logic. Hence it is said that the Odes have been universally praised.

Ode to a Nightingale (1819) brings out the contrast between eternal glories of nature and the painful realities of life. The poet becomes a victim to the conflict between these two themes. The Ode has a rare organic unity and logical development of thought. Listening to the song of the nightingale, the poet is oppressed by its beauty and joy. His heart aches and a drowsy numbness pains him owing to an excess of joy in the nightingale's song. First, he wishes for a draught of cool wine so that by its aid he may escape from, "*The weariness, the fever, and the fret*" of life into the beautiful world — the melodious plot of beechen green, and shadows numberless — where the bird is pouring forth its soul abroad in wild ecstasy.

Then comes the thought that he does not need the aid of Bacchus and his pards. He would fly there on "the viewless wings of poesy". The very next moment he is there, and although it is dark, he divines all its beauties. He has often thought that he would welcome death, and feels that now, with the joyous song of the bird pouring into his ears, it would be more, "rich to die" than ever before. Then he reflects that the same song must have been heard in all times and places. With his own mortality he contrasts the immortality of the bird. Thus the main theme of the ode is the same as that of the Grecian Ode, *i.e., the immutability of the beauty of art, as shown in the bird's song, contrasted with the transitoriness of life. Hence it would be true to say that "the Ode does not celebrate any song-bird, but the bird's song"*.

In the Ode on a Grecian Urn, the urn is a symbol of perfection and eternal beauty. It is not temporal appeal which fades with the passage of time. Keats idealizes the urn as a moment of immortality by describing the scenes engraved on it with great vividness. The young girl on the urn will never grow old, the blossoming trees will never experience winter, and the empty village will never reveal its secrets. All these scenes are described to illustrate how art gives life a quality of permanence. In this way the urn represents the ideal state of human existence, a state which is forever youthful without decay or death. It is a "cold pastoral" in the sense that the scenes depicted there no longer exist. They are gone. But the experience of the story that the urn depicts is eternal. Hence, it is permanent, and also beautiful. It is frozen in time and such an art makes man's life evolve higher and help overcome or combat the hurdles of life. All this is finally attributed to beauty because it is beauty which gives us truth and makes art appealing.

Ode to Psyche is based on a Greek legend which typifies the purification of the human soul through suffering. Keats regarded Psyche as the personification of Beauty rather than of the human soul. In the Ode to Melancholy Keats treats the theme of Beaumont and Milton in a manner entirely his own. The ode takes its colouring from the personal experience of the external source of melancholy. Ode to Autumn is one of those works of art in which the praise is unanimous. The ode is entirely impersonal. The poet becomes a sensitive instrument of expression, the charms of Autumn, which is a season of "mellow-fruitfulness" when ripeness is all. Ode to Maia-A Fragment blends with subtle art, two sources of the poet's happiest inspiration — the spirit of Greece as he understood it and the peaceful beauty of Nature. In Ode to Fancy the poet praises highly the pleasure of imagination. The poet invites us to give free play to our imagination. Ode to Poet is about "the double immortality of poets", one on this earth through their poems and the other in heaven.

#### 4.11.6. Charles Dickens:

Dickens is the greatest comic novelist in English ; he is also the most truly poetic novelist. So far as we can label him at all, he was a fantasist, and he forces us to accept the world he creates by the sheer compelling power of the intensity of his imagination. It was an hallucinatory imagination and so long as he remains within the comic and satiric or the melodramatic, he forces us to share the hallucination. His defects are many and yet they scarcely matter. He was a great original. He owed something, in his early books particularly, to the eighteenth century novelists – high spirits, the joy in the rough and tumble, the picaresque sequence of events; and these he transmitted to later novelists, to Wells, for instance, in *Mr. Polly*. But he owed much more to himself. To find anything comparable in fiction to his own special contribution to the novel – his sense of symbolism, the hallucinatory intensity of his imagination, the huge self-soliloquising monster he created – we have to go to Dostoevsky and to a lesser degree, Kafka and James Joyce. As for his influence, how can it be estimated? His work has become a part of the literary climate within which western man lives.

#### 4.11.7. Dickens: His Life & Works:

Born in 1812 near Portsea, Charles Dickens was the son of John Dickens, a clerk in the Navy Pay Office. He was a boy of a retiring disposition, he “much preferred to curl himself up in a corner with a book, rather than take part in the midst of games”. His mother taught him the alphabet and later on he was sent to a school run by one Mr. Giles. As a small child, standing on the kitchen table, he had entertained his father’s friends with comic songs, and this represents a side of Dickens, the importance of which cannot be over estimated. He was a born entertainer, a man who had to entertain, because it was a need of his nature to impose his personality on others by making them cry. Indeed, all the accounts indicate that he was a great actor, and so it was natural that, as a youth, he should think of becoming one professionally.

As Walter Allen tells us, Dickens began his career as a writer in 1833 by writing, “little sketches of cockney characters he had come across in his hours of wandering about London. He signed them ‘Boz’, which was his nickname for his younger brother, derived from the child’s mispronunciation of ‘Moses’. He has also been appointed to the regular staff of a newspaper, The Morning Chronicle. While he was writing the first number of The Pickwick Papers, he married Miss Catherine Hogarth, daughter of a fellow- worker on The Morning Chronicle. After gaining fame and wealth as a writer of The Pickwick Papers, Dickens realized that his ambitions could be materialized only through literature. He found that as a writer he was “his own man for ever”. He had earned enough, and he would now write what he liked, while previously he had written “to order and had not found himself”. In Oliver Twist (1837-38) and Nicholas Nickleby (1838-39), “we behold the crusader with wrongs to set right, the journalist with evils to expose, the philanthropist with causes to proclaim, and the melodramatist with villains to denounce” (Sampson). By now Dickens’ popularity had grown and the demand for his novels was increasing. He now constructed an elaborate framework for his forthcoming novels, “calling the work Master Humphrey’s Clock, but he sensibly abandoned the notion, and the books appeared separately as the Old Curiosity Shop (1840), which was an immense success, and Barnaby Rudge (1841), a historical romance”.

At the invitation of Washington Irving, Dickens left for the U.S.A. where the people accorded him an enthusiastic reception. He wrote his impressions of American life in American Notes (1842)

and Martin Chuzzlewit (1843). Dickens' next work was the famous A Christmas Carol (1843), a collection of five Christmas stories. Then he let out his house in Devonshire Terrace, and accompanied by Mrs. Dickens, and her sister Miss Hogarth, left England for Italy, where they remained till July 1845.

In 1859, Dickens started All the year Round as a sequel to Household Words. This new journal was run more on literary lines. He contributed his A Tale of Two Cities to this Journal and collected the articles he contributed to this magazine under the title The Uncommercial Traveller (1861). He wrote Great Expectations in 1860 which is undoubtedly one of the best works of Dickens. Our Mutual Friend (1864) is his last complete long tale.

Dickens' life was full of hectic activity and strenuous enterprises and this told upon his health. A railway accident broke his nerves, but his brave spirit did not yield to any physical or nervous weakness. In spite of his weak nerves, he continued, with the public readings of his works, and as a result he was, on many occasions, awfully exhausted. This put a terrible strain on his health. In 1864, he revisited America where he was again cordially welcomed. He began his last novel The Mystery of Edwin Drood in 1869, but the novel could not be completed because death snatched him away on June 8, 1870.

Such is the life and career of one of the greatest novelists that England has ever produced. His remains lie buried in the Poet's Corner, Westminster Abbey.

#### 4.11.8 Discussion:

Charles Dickens began his career as a novelist with Sketches by Boz (1836), a series of pen portraits dealing with London life in the style and manner of Leigh Hunt. The next novel of Dickens caught the public eye and at once placed him at the helm of the novelists of England. The book recounts the adventures of Pickwick, the leader of the club, and his companions, Winkle, Snodgrass, Topman and Sam Wellar. The members of this club are frequently involved in difficult situations from which they are extricated by the ingenuity and skill of Mr. Pickwick. There are more than sixty lively and sparkling scenes full of humour, with more than three hundred and fifty characters, some of them making their appearance only once, to win for themselves a lasting place in our hearts. However, considered as a novel, the book has serious drawbacks: "The incidents are loosely connected and the chronology will not bear inspection, but in an abundance of detail of a high quality, in vivacity of humour, in acute and accurate observation, the book is of the first rank. It is doubtful, if Dickens ever improved upon it" (Albert).

The theme of Oliver Twist is the pathos and innocence of childhood. It exposed the wickedness and criminality of cheats, sharpers and pickpockets, like Fagin, the old Jew, and his accomplices, the burglar, Bill Sikes, and the artful Dodger and Nancy. Oliver Twist is brought up in a workhouse dominated by Bumble, the parish beadle. He is tyrannical, and one day when Oliver asks for more than his usual share of food, he is severely beaten and is ultimately driven out of the Poor House. He falls into the clutches of a group of villains headed by Fagin. He is brought up as a pickpocket and a thief. He is sent out for thieving and receives a serious injury. He is rescued by a good man, Mr. Bronlow, but is again entrapped by the villains. However, they are ultimately brought to book and punished severely for their nefarious activities. Fagin is hanged, and Sikes commits suicide. Oliver Twist is restored to good fortune as strange facts come to light about his parentage. He is married to Rose, the daughter of his saviour. "The novel ends on a note of comedy, though throughout the work the tragedy of persecuted life is presented with a grimness and macabre imagination of which Dickens was a master".



The reformatory and idealistic tone of the novelist becomes clear for the first time in Oliver Twist. Before the completion of Oliver Twist in 1838, Dickens began the publication of Nicholas Nickleby, again a reformatory novel, attacking the evil practices in the Yorkshire schools. This novel is a severe indictment of heartless teachers like Squires, and a fierce condemnation of the kind of teaching imparted by the teachers in schools.

Dombey and Son is a study in the evil effects of pride and haughtiness. As the novel opens, we meet Mr. Dombey, a proud, rich Merchant. He is the proprietor of the firm, "Dombey and Sons". He is blessed with a son, Paul, though his wife dies in giving birth to this son. Dombey proudly brings him up, and sends him to Dr. Blimber's school, when he comes of age. At school, Paul Dombey is ill-treated and under the harsh school discipline the boy sickens and dies. Dombey, after the death of Paul, is heart-broken. He loses interest in life and neglects his daughter, Florence, who starts loving Walter Gay, a frank, good-hearted youth in Dombey's service. Dombey marries again, but his pride and insolence are unbearable to his newly married wife who elopes. He sustains heavy loss in business. He is completely broken down. He retires to pass the remaining days of his life in solitude. His neglected daughter, Florence, returns to him and brings solace to his cheerless life. This novel is better constructed and has greater coherence than Martin Chuzzlewit.

In 1840 Dickens started a miscellany to be called Master Humphrey's Clock which was to be the frame-work for the next serial Old Curiosity Shop. In this novel, the novelist portrays the pathetic and miserable life of Little Nell and her grandfather who have to suffer great financial difficulties, a result of certain borrowings by the old man from a sinister and hard-hearted moneylender, Daniel Quip, who harasses them mercilessly, till little Nell meets her death. She is followed soon after by her grandfather. The death of Nell and her grandfather at once remind us of the death of Cordelia and King Lear, though the pathos in the novel is overdone and slips into the realm of sentimentality.

Dickens' next work Barnaby Rudge is a historical, romantic novel dealing with the anti-property riots of 1780, which shook England for a considerable time. "The two parts are not well knit together, the interest with which we begin is lost in far wider interests before we end; nevertheless Barnaby Rudge is free from Dickens' worst vices of construction. Granting the imperfection of the scheme, it is closely wrought and its details not ill-conceived."

Martin Chuzzlewit came next. It is a formless work, and in spite of the fact that it contains many fine characters and theatrical situations, it cannot be placed high among the works of our novelist. The novel Martin Chuzzlewit deals with the adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit, first in England and then in America. The American life of Martin, as portrayed by Dickens, is unsatisfactory, and the novel failed to arouse the interest of its American readers. In this novel, Dickens has given us some of his finest pen-portraits. His minor characters do not play a significant part in the development of the plot, but they are better remembered than the main characters even though they figure prominently in the main story. Of those figures who really deserve our appreciation, the most popular are Pecksniff, and architect and arch-hypocrite, Mrs. Gamp, the disreputable old nurse, Tom Pinch, Pecksniff's loyal assistant and Mark Tapley, the optimistic and cheerful servant of Martin who follows him to America.

Of the later novels of Dickens, David Copperfield (1849-50) is the best. It is Dickens' autobiography. "The pen which wrote David Copperfield," says Hugh Walker, "was often dipped in

his own blood". Dickens himself liked this novel and once remarked, "I like David Copperfield the best". The life and adventures of David Copperfield are, in fact the life and adventures of the novelist himself. The figure of the immortal Micawber is the pen-portrait of his own father. Uriah Heep who stands for fawning flattery, sneaking humility and hypocrisy, Murdstone who stands for a cruel father, Peggoty who stands for a kind nurse, Betsy Trotwood who represents a benevolent, though an eccentric lady, are some of the memorable pen-portraits of this novel. Commenting on the excellence of this novel, Baker writes, "Both critical and popular opinion are at one in voting David Copperfield their favourite among the novels of Dickens. First of all it happens to be in large part his autobiography. There is a plot in David Copperfield and some of the largest episodes are as theatrical as any ever devised. It is a tale of ups and downs, joys and sorrows, but the prevailing tone is one of cheerfulness and confidence in the essential goodness of life". And though it is not entirely free from the device of poetic justice, this is not one of his didactic stories. "On the contrary except for the exposure of Uriah Heep, a few reformations of sinners, and the lurid tragedy of Steerforth, all of which are extraneous to the history of David, this is tolerably free from both moralism and melodrama."

Dickens' next novel Bleak House, was published in 1853. It is a vigorous satire on the abuses of law courts, particularly the old Chancery Court. No better exposure of the delays and iniquities of the law courts is found in any other English novel. Hard Times was published in 1854. It is a satirical exposure of the evils of industrialism and the excessive love for the money and the worship of machinery. Gradgrind, a miser and a man of cold, calculating intellect, and Josiah Bounderby, a manufacturer and rich merchant, are the objects of satire. The novel attacks gross materialism and upholds imaginative and spiritual values of life. Little Dorrit, published in 1857, deals with the corruptions and delays in government institutions, particularly the Circumlocution Office and Marshalsea prison. Through Dorrit's character and experiences, the evils of prison life have been exposed. Reform in prison life is suggested in this novel.

A Tale of Two Cities, published in 1895, is historical novel dealing with events connected with the French Revolution which shook the whole of Europe. The two cities are London and Paris. The scenes shift from one city to another. The chief characters of this novels are Dr. Marnet, who suffered for many years in Bastille, Lucy Marnet, his daughter, who married Charles Darnay, a French aristocrat, Sidney Carton, the young lawyer, who out of his love for Lucy sacrificed his life in order to save the life of Charles Darnay, Madame Defarge, the hard-hearted revolutionary leader of the French, and Miss Pross, who is the protecting angel of Lucy. It is a literary work, faithful to history and sound in plot-construction. Great Expectations is a novel recounting the trials and adventures in the life of Pip, a young boy. He receives great help from his brother-in-law, Joe Gargery, a simple-minded man, and the convict, Abel Magwitch, whom he had once provided food in the marshes near the banks of the river Thames. The character of Miss Havisham, a rich, eccentric lady, is unrealistic and fantastic. The love of Pip and Estella adds to the interest of the novel.

#### **4.11.9. Conclusion:**

Keats is a unique phenomenon in more ways than one, but in nothing so much as in the rapid maturing of his powers. Dying at twenty-five, he has left behind a rich body of poetry which merits comparison with the best of Shakespeare. It should also be added that his letters show a growing awareness of life and its problems and, had he lived longer, his poetry would have shown greater concern for the life of his fellowmen. Keats is truly a poet's poet, who has influenced

profoundly Tennyson, the Pre-Raphaelites, and, a host of other poets. Though Keats has left behind him a number of long narrative poems – ‘Endymion’, ‘Isabella’, ‘Lamia’, ‘Hyperion’ etc. – his genius was essentially odaic: it is in his six great Odes that Keats is at his best. There never were, nor have there been ever since, things of such perfect beauty. His Odes shall be read and enjoyed so long as English language and literature are read and enjoyed.

The Odes represent at its best the poet’s sensuous enjoyment of Beauty—beauty of art, of nature, and of the ancient world of the Hellas. It was Beauty, and Beauty alone, which inspired him and made him create. In the ‘Ode to Nightingale’ the poet enjoys the immortal Beauty of the Nightingale’s song, in the ‘Ode to Autumn’ the mellow fruitfulness of nature in that season of golden mists, and in the ‘Grecian Urn’ his imagination is fired by the perfect Beauty of a piece of Greek sculpture. Not only does he enjoy sensuous Beauty, but he goes a step further and identifies Beauty with Truth. Thus in the Odes we find his conception of Beauty taking on a spiritual turn, a fact which is amply evidenced by his letters.

Keats was a conscious artist. He had a high opinion of his own calling and advocated that a poet should perfect his powers through application, study and thought. He followed in practice what he preached. Though poetry came to him as naturally as leaves to a tree, yet he carefully revised and corrected what he wrote so that he may achieve perfection. Keats’ sureness of touch in the correction of his verse reveals a rare sense of the consummate artist.

Dickens is the best of all the English novelists. Previous to his day, the novelists only wrote of the life and adventures of the rich and aristocratic sections of society. Dickens was the first to introduce to the reading public, life of the poor and the oppressed. He had a very marked sense of humour and his appeal is to the heart rather than to the head. He rouses in us pity for the lot of the poor whose sufferings he describes, and resentment against those who ill-treated and exploited them. He had a special love for orphan children as he had been left an orphan himself and had suffered much cruelty in his early years.

It is indisputable that Dickens was a complex, paradoxical man; exuberant but reserved; eager for popularity yet with a high regard for his art, a man of the people yet in his own eyes superior to them, a fantastic who based his extravagance on realistic fact, an optimist whose vision intensified shadows. But to see him merely as a haunted man or a manic-depressive and to try to identify this hypothetical pathological intensity with the level of his literary achievement is to miss the essential sanity of the man and the essential rightness of the bulk of his fiction.

His early novels are like shapeless bags which contain something for everybody and parts of which one does not like, can more or less be ignored. We remember the early novels not as wholes but by Episodes (Walter Allen). Dickens was a bad constructor of plots. His plots – except of the last two or three novels, A Tale of Two Cities, Barnaby Rudge, Edwin Drood – are all shapeless and incoherent, and lack unity. His first novel, The Pickwick Papers is no novel at all. It has the vaguest of schemes, “It is practically destitute of plan; it is not so much a novel as a miscellany into which Dickens pours all his experience and observation of life and character”.

The most important fact about Dickens’s art of characterization is the immense variety and vitality of his characters. Of all the Victorian crowded canvases, his is the most crowded. In David Copperfield there are ninety-five characters. Every novel of his, more specially David Copperfield, is a portrait-gallery, full of some of the immortal figures of literature, whom, once we

have been acquainted with them, we can never forget. In the words of Dryden, "Here is God's plenty", indeed. His Micawbers, his Peggottys, his Betsy Trotwoods, his Uriah Heeps, and others are amazingly alive and vital.

Dickens is one of the greatest humourists in the history of English literature. In this respect, he stands next only to Shakespeare. His humour is equally varied and all-pervasive. It was as a humorist that Dickens made his name. Humour is the supreme quality of his genius. It is the very soul of his works, and like the soul it permeates a living fabric which could never have existed without its creative breath. The success of his most earnest purpose depended upon his humour. He made his readers laugh, and from mere laughter they turned to a discussion of the various problems suggested by his pages. Without humour he might have been a social reformer, but certainly he would have failed as a novelist.

Critics after critics have recognized the genius of Dickens, but they have also emphasized his many and glaring subordinations. Thus F.R. Leavis calls him a great entertainer, but one who had no profound responsibility, "as a creative artist". Long praised him as an entertaining friend and guest, one with a clear, optimistic message to an age overburdened with social problems, but also points out that judged by the same standards of art as we judge others, he is found wanting.

#### 4.11.10 Sample Questions:

- 1) Write a note on Keats as a romantic poet ?
- 2) Write a few lines on the sensuousness of Keats's poetry.
- 3) "Beauty is truth, truth beauty" Explain this line.
- 4) Write an essay on Ode on a Grecian Urn.
- 5) Give a general estimate of Dickens as a novelist.
- 6) Write a note on the blending of humour and pathos in the novels of Dickens.
- 7) Bring out the autobiographical note in the novels of Dickens.
- 8) Write a brief note on Dickens' art of characterization.

#### 4.11.11. Reference Books:

1. Charles Armitage Brown : Life of John Keats (1836)
2. Robert Bridges : John Keats : A Critical Essay (1895)
3. Hugh l'A Fausset : Keats : A Study in Development (1922)
4. J. Middleton Murray : Studies in Keats (1930)
5. D. Hewlett : A Life of John Keats (1937)
6. C.L. Finney : The Evolution of Keats Poetry (1936)
7. H.R. Ridley : Keats's Craftsmanship : A study in Poetic Development (1934)
8. Edmund Blunden : John Keats (1950)

- P.N.V.D. Mahesh

**Lesson- 4.12****MATTHEW ARNOLD AND T.S.ELIOT****4.12.1. Objectives:**

The purpose of this lesson is to

- introduce Arnold as a representative of classic reserve and romantic feeling.
- understand Eliot's poetry as criticism on modern contemporary society.

**Structure**

- 4.12.1. Objectives
- 4.12.2. Introduction
- 4.12.3. Matthew Arnold
- 4.12.4. His Life and Works
- 4.12.5. Discussion of his works
- 4.12.6. T.S.Eliot
- 4.12.7. His Life and Works
- 4.12.8. Discussion of his works.
- 4.12.9. Glossary
- 4.12.10. Conclusion
- 4.12.11. Sample Questions
- 4.12.12. Reference Books

**4.12.2. Introduction:**

The Victorian Age, or the Age of Tennyson was an era of material affluence, political awakening, democratic reforms, industrial and mechanical progress, scientific advancement, social unrest, educational expansion, idealism and pessimism. The literature of this period reflects the spirit of the age. It was an age of turbulent social changes. Dickens, Kingsley and Mrs. Gaskell vividly described the evils of the Industrial Revolution in their novels. The poets, novelists and prose writers were aware of their social responsibility. Almost all of them were makers of doctrines, preachers of some crusade or physicians offering some cure for man's perplexities and despairs. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century realism had captured the novel and the drama and had made serious inroads into the domain of poetry. A note of pessimism, doubt and despair runs through Victorian literature and this is evident in the poetry of Matthew Arnold and Arthur H. Clough. A note of idealism and optimism runs in the poetry of Browning and Tennyson, Macaulay, Carlyle and Ruskin and the novelists like Dickens, Thackeray and Meredith inspire us with their faith in humanity. The questioning spirit in Clough, the pessimism of Thomson, the melancholy of Matthew Arnold, the fatalism of Fitzgerald are all the outcome of the skeptical tendencies evoked by scientific research.

Modern Age is one of the turbulent eras in the history of English literature. It is called the age of anxiety and interrogation. The old restraints and heroes were rejected and the generation claimed unfettered freedom of heart and action. The modern man does not accept anything unless it is tested on the touchstone of reason. Men and women showed an extraordinary enthusiasm for speculation, experiment and reform. They evolved a creed of 'art for life's sake', for the sake of the community. Writers concentrated their attention on the problem of modern life. The rapid growth of science and materialism disgusted many poets and writers. The literature of the New Age is the literature of challenge and of the reconstruction of moral values. It is an exciting age for writers – an age which marked a definite break with the past, a challenge to authority, an assertion in the right to be anarchistic in thought and in form – romantic, realistic passionate – a self-conscious age. Major writers of this age are: Rudyard Kipling, H.G.Wells, John Galsworthy, James Barrie, Joseph Conrad, Arnold Bennet, Samuel Butler, George Bernard Shaw, W.B.Yeats, T.S. Eliot and so on

#### 4.12.3. Matthew Arnold (1822-1888):

In the world of literature, Arnold has occupied an authoritative position as critic and teacher. In his literary work two different moods are distinct. In his poetry he reflects the doubt of an age which witnessed the conflict between science and religion. In his prose he shows the cavalier spirit – aggressive and self-confident. Arnold is more like the cultivated Greek – his voice is soft, his speech suave, but he leaves the impression if you happen to differ with him that you must be deficient in culture. The total impression which Arnold makes in his prose is that of a spiritual man of the world. In his own way he was a prophet and a preacher. He strives hard to release his countrymen from bondage to trivial things.

#### 4.12.4 His Life and Works:

Matthew Arnold was born in Laleham, in the valley of the Thames, in 1822. His father was Dr. Thomas Arnold, headmaster of Rugby. Arnold entered Balliol College, Oxford, and won many prizes in poetry and his excellence in classics was remarkable. His **Scholar Gipsy** and **Thyrsis** contain many references to Oxford and the surrounding country. Arnold taught the classics at Rugby, and in 1847 he became private secretary to Lord Lansdowne, who appointed the young poet to the position of inspector of schools under the government. In this position he worked patiently for the next thirty-five years travelling about the country, examining teachers and correcting endless examination papers for nearly ten years. He was Professor of Poetry at Oxford. Arnold's literary work divides itself into three periods – (i) Poetical (ii) Critical (iii) Practical.

**(i) Poetical Period:** He had written poetry since his school days. His first volume, **The Strayed Reveller and Other Poems**, appeared anonymously in 1849. Three years later he published **Empedocles on Etna and Other Poems**. During 1853 -1855 he published his signed poems, and twelve years later appeared his last volume of poetry. As his poetic works met with little favour he abandoned poetry and concentrated on critical writing.

**(ii) Critical Period:** The chief works of his critical period are the lectures on **Translating Homer** and two volumes of **Essays in Criticism**, which made Arnold one of the best known literary men in England. Like Ruskin he turned to practical questions and his friendship's garland was intended to satirize and reform the great middle class of England.

**(iii) Practical Period:** **Culture and Anarchy** the most characteristic work of his practical period, appeared in 1869. These were followed by books on religious subjects—**St. Paul, Protestantism**,

**Last Essays on Church and Religion. The Discourses in America** completes the list of his important works. He died suddenly in 1888.

Of Arnold's narrative poems, the two best known are **Balder Dead**, an incursion into the field of Norse mythology and **Sohrab and Rostum** is taken from the **Shah-Namah** of the Persian poet Firdausi. Arnold produced this poem which has the rare and difficult combination of classic reserve and romantic feeling. Arnold frequently copies Milton, especially in his repetition of ideas and phrases. Fights are short; grief is long; therefore the poet gives few lines to the combat, but lingers over the son's joy at finding his father, and the father's quenchless sorrow at the death of his son.

The next important poems are the elegies **Thyrsis**, **The Scholar Gipsy**, **Obermann**, **Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse** and **Rugby Chapel**. **Thyrsis** is a lament for the poet Arthur Hugh Clough, which is sometimes classed with Milton's **Lycidas** and Shelley's **Adonais**. Arnold's ideals and methods are best expressed in **Dover Beach**.

#### 4.12.5. Discussion of his works:

Of Arnold's best narrative poems, the two best known are **Balder Dead** and **Sohrab and Rostum**. The theme of the latter poem is taken from the **Shah-Namah** (Book Of Kings) of the Persian poet Firdausi.

**Sohrab and Rostum:** The story is of Rostum, who fell asleep one day when he had grown weary of hunting. While he slept a band of robbers stole his favourite horse. In trailing the robbers he came to the palace of the king and he fell in love with the king's daughter and married her. As he was of adventurous nature he went back to fight against his own people. While he was away his wife gave birth to Sohrab. He grew up into a man and became the hero of the Turan army. War arose between Turans and Persians and they chose Sohrab and Rostum as their heroes respectively. Sohrab's chief interest is to find his father. Before the combat he demanded that his opponent was not Rostum ; but his father kept his identity a secret. On the first day of the fight Rostum was overcome but by the generosity of Sohrab he was spared. On the second day Rostum mortally wounded Sohrab. Rostum recognized his son by the bracelet, which he had given to his wife Temineh. Sohrab died and Rostum went home and led a life of sorrow and remorse.

**Empedocles on Etna:** **Empedocles on Etna** is a dramatic poem in which Arnold portrays the philosopher Empedocles who committed suicide by throwing himself into the crater of Etna, on the verge of his last act. Empedocles expresses his intellectual doubts, dismissing the reassuring platitudes of religion and philosophy; man's yearning for joy, calm and enlightenment is in itself no proof that these things exist or can be attained. He grieves over his own last dwindling faculty of joy and finally, in a kind of triumph, concluding that at least he has been ever honest in his doubts, hurls himself to death.

**Rugby Chapel:** The poet visits Rugby school some fifteen years after his father's death on an autumn evening. He notices that the evening is rather cold, the field is strewn with the dead, dry leaves, and there is darkness around. His eyes fall upon the Chapel of the school, and this reminds him that his father lies buried there. This turns his thoughts towards his father.

Arnold remembers that during his father's lifetime, even during gloomy autumn evenings, he and the other boys never felt sad, because his father had always been cheerful, enthusiastic,

full of happiness. His father's happiness had been like a ray of light that filled the dark atmosphere. He also feels that his father had been like a large, great, shady oak tree under whose wide branches everyone had lived secure and protected. From thinking about his own father's life, Arnold turns to think about human life in general. His father is not such a man. He did not wish to save only himself but also others. He always sought to help the weak, the helpless, and the disabled so that they, too, may reach heaven. Such men are god's sons, for they carry out God's will with a willing heart and deep devotion. Arnold points out that the larger part of the humanity has to struggle with difficulties all through life. Because of difficulties people become hopeless, helpless, and weak. They find it difficult to lead a moral, virtuous life and thus achieve heaven. Men like his father are needed to guide them. Heroic men like his father always accept this responsibility. They stand in front of the army of men and lead them.

**The Scholar-Gipsy:** *The Scholar-Gipsy* is one of the best elegies of Arnold. It is a long poem of twenty-five stanzas with ten lines each. The poem has been cast in the form of the conversational pastoral elegy. The poet in the guise of a shepherd addresses a fellow-shepherd and asks him to go and graze his sheep. But when the day is over, he should return and renew his search for the scholar-gypsy who is said to haunt the Oxford countryside. The poem is based on an old legend, narrated by Glanvill in his *The Vanity of Dogmatizing*, of an 'Oxford scholar poor', who, tired of seeking preferment, joined the gypsies to learn their lore, roamed with them, and still haunts the Oxford countryside. With this is woven a vivid evocation of the landscape and reflections on the contrasts between the single-minded faith of the Scholar Gypsy and the modern world.

**Essays in Criticism:** *The first place among Arnold's prose works must be given to Essays in Criticism, which raised the author to the rank of great critics. His fundamental ideas appeal to us. According to him the aim of criticism is neither to find fault nor to display the critic's own learning; it is to know the best which has been thought and said in the world; and by using this knowledge he must create a current of fresh and free thought.*

**Culture and Anarchy:** *This contains most of the terms – culture, sweetness and light, barbarian, philistine, hebraism and many other terms – now associated with Arnold's work and influence. The term 'barbarian' refers to the aristocratic classes, whom Arnold thought to be essentially crude in soul. 'Philistine' refers to the middle classes, narrow-minded and self-satisfied people whom Arnold satirizes with the idea of opening their minds to the new ideas. 'Hebraism' is Arnold's term for moral education. Arnold says that the upper-most idea with Hellenism is to see things as they are; the upper-most idea with Hebraism is conduct and obedience. Arnold pleads for both these elements in life which together aim at culture.*

#### 4.12.6. T.S. Eliot (1885-1965):

The poetic origins of T.S.Eliot were complex. His intellectual development is clear. His intellectual origins were in part English and in part continental. John Donne's influence on Eliot was remarkable. From him he learnt to present antithetical moods in a single poem, the cultivation of metaphysical conceits and the use of colloquial diction. French poets like Jules Laforgue, Tristan, Corbiere and St.John Perse influenced Eliot's poetic technique. In *The Waste Land* T.S.Eliot observed the technique of projecting the themes and moods through a series of apparently incoherent images.



#### 4.12.7. His Life and Works:

T.S. Eliot was born in St. Louis, Missouri on September 26<sup>th</sup> 1885. The poet's ancestors were for several generations mainly merchants. T.S. Eliot prepared for college at the Smith Academy in St. Louis. He entered Harvard in Autumn in 1906. He was an editor of the undergraduate literary magazine, ***The Harvard Advocate***. To this magazine he contributed a few poems. Irving Babbitt and George Santayana exerted their influence a lot on Eliot. After completing his college course, Eliot continued his study of philosophy in the Harvard Graduate School. During 1910-1911 he spent his time in Paris reading French Literature. He returned to America in 1911 and passed the next three years at Harvard, extending his study of Metaphysics, Logic and Psychology and Sanskrit. In 1913 he was appointed as an assistant in Philosophy at Harvard.

Eliot was awarded a travelling fellowship and toured Germany before the war. He contributed reviews to the ***International Journal of Ethics***. His mature poem ***The Love Song of Alfred J. Prufrock*** was published in Harriet Monroe's newly established journal ***Poetry***. In 1915 he was married and in 1916 started teaching French, Latin, Lower Mathematics, Swimming, History, Geography, and Baseball at the ***Highgate School*** near London. He changed his option to Banking and dealt with documentary bills, acceptances and foreign exchange in Lloyds' Bank. He became a frequent contributor to the ***Athenaeum***. In 1923 he became editor of ***The Criterion***.

As a result of his growing interest in the English church and state he became a British subject. In 1947, he was awarded the ***Order of Merit*** and the ***Nobel Prize for Literature*** in 1955. His first wife, who had been in ill health since the early 1930's died in 1947. He married Miss Valerie Fletcher, his private secretary, in January 1957. He died in London in 1965 and according to his own instruction, his ashes were interred in the church of ***St. Michael's*** in East Cokes. A commemorative plaque on the Church wall bears his chosen epitaph —

“In my beginning is my end. In my end is my beginning.”

***Among Eliot's poetry the important works are Prufrock and Other Observations (1917), Poems (1920), The Waste Land (1922), Poems 1909-1925, Ash Wednesday (1930) and Four Quartets (1944). Eliot's seven dramas are Sweeney Agonistes (1926-27), The Rock (1934), Murder in the Cathedral (1935), The Family Reunion (1939), The Cocktail Party (1949), The Confidential Clerk (1953), and The Elder Statesman (1958). They contain some of the best dramatic poetry since the Elizabethans. Of his prose, The Sacred Wood (1920), a collection of essays came first. Most of his prose belongs to the 1930s; important of them are: For Lancelot Andrews (1928), The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism (1933), After Strange Gods (1934), Elizabethan Essays (1934) What is a Classic? (1945) and so on.***

#### 4.12.8. Discussion of his works:

***Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock:*** *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock is the song of a being divided between passion and timidity. It is a song of frustration and emotional conflict. The poem starts off with action, an invitation to go, and moves to inaction and a desire for inactivity to the point of enforced release from pain. The poem is a monologue, spoken by I who is presumably Prufrock. He talks to a “you” who appears to be a companion, perhaps a woman. Prufrock is an interesting tragic figure. He is man caught in a sense of defeated idealism and tortured by unsatisfied desire. He is unimportant to others, but aware of his own despair. He doesn't dare to seek love because he is afraid of disappointment, partially because he is afraid that he could not find love to begin with, and partially because even if he could find it, it would not satisfy his needs. For Eliot,*

*Prufrock's position is an image of the sensitive man caught in a stupid world. Prufrock is an aging romantic entrapped by a rotting world of pseudo-gentility. While he is aware of beauty, he is too inhibited to seek it, too hesitant to reach for it, and too surrounded by the sordid to achieve it. To add to his problems, Prufrock also had a tragic flaw. As a result of his timidity he has become incapable of action of any sort. These problems coupled with his tragic flaw unite to destroy him.*

*The famous opening line of the poem comparing the evening to a patient etherized upon a table was considered shocking and offensive. The poem then follows the conscious experience of a man, Prufrock lamenting his physical and intellectual inertia, the lost opportunities in his life and lack of spiritual progress with the recurrent theme of carnal love unachieved. The locations described can be interpreted either as actual, physical experiences or mental recollections from the subconscious mind. For eg: “ In the room women come and go...”*

Its main stream reception can be gauged from a review in the *Times Literary Supplement* on June 21st 1970: “The fact that these things occurred to the mind of Mr. Eliot is surely of very smallest importance to any one, even to himself.” The poem's structure was influenced by Eliot's extensive reading of Dante's *Alighieri*; references to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and many other literary works are present in the poem.

**The Four Quartets (1944):** This a philosophy poem in which T.S.Eliot examines the categories of time and eternity. It is a series of variations of themes, which are traditional, orthodox, and in a sense unarguable. The four poems in this work are *Burnt Norton, East Coker, The Dry Salvages* and *Little Gidding* which actually appeared separately. The Quartets are personal and emotional. *The Four Quartets* confirms the realization of the poet that time is always ‘time in the usual conditions of earthly life’; and the first few lines of ‘Burnt Norton’ may to this extent be said to be an acceptance of Bergson's Theory of Time—‘all time is eternally present’. Indeed Bergson's whole theory of creative evolution seems to have helped in inspiring the thought process of *Four Quartets*. Thus the idea of all life being characterized by movement, as opposed to rigidity and quiescence is of basic importance. The quartets are musical rather than dramatic in structure and quality and contemplative rather than descriptive. The poem is an attempt to bring into a more exact balance the will and creative imagination. It attempts to harness the creative imagination, which in all Eliot's earlier poetry ran its own course, edited but not consciously directed.

**Murder in the Cathedral:** Eliot wrote a drama in verse when the whole age is dominated by prose. The story is about the murder of an Archbishop in his Cathedral. A man of religion was killed in a holy place at a time when it was regarded as a sanctuary. The story was tragic. The religious atmosphere in which Becket lived and died and the supernatural influence—which is to be inferred as inspiring his self sacrifice suggest a theme similar to what is found in Greek Tragedy. Becket must have undergone an inner struggle before becoming a willing instrument of God's will. The three unities were observed.

The function of the Chorus is to mediate between the dramatist and the audience by comment and information. After the Greek fashion, he started the play just before the climax. The past is learnt through report and reference. In the interval they have undergone a purification of the spirit through suffering. The four tempters can be viewed at two levels. The first three tempters represent his long- dead love of pleasure and desire for power. In the fourth tempter, Becket finds revealed his own soul as it is at the moment. The mirror is held up to a search for revenge and glory here and hereafter masking itself as a quest for martyrdom. Becket has to ask himself in

near despair whether there is no way to cure his soul's sickness, which does not lead to damnation in pride. The answer is found in submitting himself to the will of God. Let God decide whether or not to make him a martyr. Finally, when the Knights come to attack him, he keeps himself ready, offering no resistance and seeking no escape. So, he is killed after he has commended his soul to God. Thus Eliot shows a martyr being made. His inner conflict is effectively dramatized through the tempters and the Christian Sermon.

**The Waste Land:** *The Waste Land* is T.S. Eliot's most ambitious poem. It is chiseled on the basis of a theme from medieval romance, invested with associations from a variety of historical and legendary events. He attempted to create a sense of sordidness, moral debility, and spiritual barrenness in modern western life. The poem consists of five sections. 'The Burial of the Dead', 'A Game of Chess', 'The Fire Sermon', 'Death by Water' and 'What the Thunder Said'. The poem was rapidly acclaimed as a statement of the post-war sense of depression and futility.

**i) *The Burial of the Dead:*** The title refers firstly to the dead fertility and secondly, the burial services of the Christian church. It is believed that the burials are followed by re-birth. However, the denizens of the waste land are spiritually dead. They do not like to be disturbed from their stupor or the futile routine of the modern life. In the modern world sex has become an animal urge without any moral or social commitment. Eliot gives two examples of guilty love—love which brings misery and death. The first example is from Wagner's Opera; it is the story of Tristan and Isolde. The second example is the recent one—the story of Hyacinth girl. Both the examples show the barrenness, boredom and frustration of mundane sex. Another hurdle in the way of spiritual progress is gambling. In any big city, one will come across this evil in different forms. Eliot mentions Madame Sosostris—a society fortune teller who is afraid of the police. She has a pack of seventy eight cards, through which she tells the fortune of her customers.

Eliot calls London city an unreal city because it has no vitality and substance. The people lack faith and character and they are the citizens of a waste land. Crowds of people go over London Bridge at nine o'clock in the morning for work. The hour has a reference to Christ's crucifixion. Eliot laments the lot of the Londoners because they are leading a life which may be called 'life-in-death.' They are spiritually barren and dead.

**ii) *A Game of Chess:*** In this section the poet indicates the failure of sex relationship in the modern world. The first scene shows the fashionable lady, who is an expert in sex intrigues. The paintings and other works of art refer to stories of ancient love and rape. The second scene shifts to a tavern where two ladies talk about sex matters. Lil's husband comes back from the army after four years. He wants an active sex life. the lady of the Rocks advises Lil to look young and pretty to retain the love of her husband, otherwise there are many girls to give company to her husband. Lil is getting old and she cannot satisfy her husband. Moreover, her last abortion has ruined her health. She is afraid of repeated motherhood. She is confused and frustrated.

**iii) *The Fire Sermon:*** The title is borrowed from the sermon of Lord Buddha. Tiresias describes the scene on the river Thames in the autumn season. The river is now deserted. There are only wastages of summer parties, when rich businessmen held picnics on the river banks. The pollution of the river stands for spiritual degeneration of the modern man and his civilization. London is an unreal city full of sexual perversions. Along with the tar and oil there is sex on the river Thames. In earlier days Elizabeth and her lover had pleasure excursions on the river. Now the daughters of Thames give stories of their seduction. The three girls have nothing to complain as this is an occurrence on the river and its banks.

**iv) Death by Water:** In this section Eliot shows the significance of water as a means of purification and rebirth. There are two associations—one from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and the other from the ancient Egyptian myth of the god of fertility. The death of Phelebas, the Greek sailor, is an example of people who devote themselves to worldly pursuits. Their youth and strength ultimately will be consumed by death. The poet tells the story of Phelebas, a young and handsome sailor who was drowned after leading a boring business career. He was caught in a whirlpool and passed through various stages. There is no chance of re-birth for the sailor who represents the modern man, because there is no desire to follow spiritual values. The rejection of higher values is the cause of the inevitable decay of modern civilization.

**v) What the Thunder Said:** The poet describes the scenes of Christ's arrest, trial and crucifixion. Though he was crucified, he is living forever through his religion. We live in bodies, not in soul. We are dying by inches due to our spiritual decline. The poet gives vivid descriptions of the ravages caused by the First World War. Eliot refers to an event in ancient history when India passed through a great crisis. Drought and famine compelled them to pray to God for divine help. God spoke to them in thunder. The words Da Da Da contain the secret of man's spiritual re-birth. The first Da means Datta i.e.; 'to give'. We must dedicate ourselves to a worthwhile cause. Secondly, Da means Dayadhvam i.e., to sympathise. We must sympathise with our fellowmen. Thirdly, Da means Damyata i.e., self control. Discipline of the mind is necessary for spiritual achievement. The poet believes that man's salvation is possible if each individual looks after his own salvation.

**The Family Reunion:** The plot of *The Family Reunion* is weak. For Amy's birthday the family assemble at Wishwood in the north of England. Harry, the protagonist, absent for eight years is coming to the reunion. A year ago Harry's wife mysteriously disappears from an ocean liner. Harry arrives, behaving strangely and shortly gives evidence that he is pursued by the furies. The family engages in some fairly civil conversation, all at cross-purposes and all trivial; and then Harry announces that he murdered his wife. The remainder of the play is concerned with Harry's movement towards an understanding.

**The Cocktail Party:** *The Cocktail Party* concerns a series of triangles. Edward Chamberlayne, a lawyer, is estranged from his wife Lavinia. She in turn, is in love with a young screen-writer named Peter Quilpe, who is in love with Celia Coplestone, a poetess. Celia is Edward's mistress and is in love with him. Lavinia is not loved by any one and Edward loves no one. The play opens in Chamberlayne, where every one except Lavinia is attending a cocktail party. Act one is devoted to exposition of the break between Edward and Celia and to the return of Lavinia. Act two takes place in Sir Henry's office. It turns out that Lavinia's return has been the result of a conspiracy arranged by Sir Henry to reconcile the Chamberlaynes. In Act three another cocktail party is about to begin. The characters drop in accidentally except Celia. Sir Henry tells the group about Celia's death. The remainder of the act disperses the visitors and leaves the Chamberlaynes alone, waiting for the cocktail party to begin.

**The Confidential Clerk:** This is a thought-provoking play which contains under its surface wit and comedy, serious consideration of such questions as the nature of identity and effects of heredity. In it the style has been diluted but it does not disturb an audience habituated to prose.

The monologue *Gerontion* shows Eliot's free adaptation of the blank verse of the later Elizabethan dramatist. *The Hollow Man* is a terrifying exposure of the meaninglessness of life without belief. Eliot's *Ash Wednesday* marks a new phase in the poet's development, in which he finds hope in the discipline of Christian religion.

#### 4.12.9. Glossary:

- suave: describes a man who is very polite, charming and usually attractive, often in a way that is slightly false
- anonymously : done by someone whose name is not known or not made public
- abandoned : to leave a place, thing or person forever.
- anarchy : lack of organization and control, especially in society because of an absence or failure of government.
- Incursion: a sudden attack on or entry into a place, especially across a border
- Mythology: related with myths (existing only in stories; imaginary stories or beliefs)
- Elegiac: relating to an elegy
- elegy: a sad poem or song, especially remembering someone who has died or something in the past.
- commemorative: to remember officially and give respect to a great person or event, especially by a public ceremony.
- plaque: a flat piece of metal, stone, wood or plastic with writing on it which is fixed to a wall, door or other object.
- lamentation: sadness and regret, or something that expresses these feelings.
- harness: a piece of equipment, with straps and fastenings, used to control or hold in place a person, animal or object.
- inter: to bury a dead body
- metaphysical: not having real existence but symbolic and showing some truth about a situation or other subject.
- recurrent: to happen many times or to happen again.
- martyr(n): a person who suffers greatly or is killed because of their political or religious beliefs, and is often admired because of it.

#### 4.12.10. Conclusion:

Arnold was not only a great scholar and a poet but also a good critic. His literary criticism as a whole is wonderfully full, suggestive and illuminating. His prose is admirable for its lucidity, grace and charm. His works are known for his colloquialism and sarcasm with deadly effect. He had also an extraordinary gift of crystallizing his ideas in telling and memorable phrases. He was one of the most stimulating writers of his time. Eliot has single-handedly accomplished the root of dramatic imagination: religion, ritual, purgation and renewal. He has concentrated upon themes that are mirrored in the intensity of the situations. He has shown the vacuum and the absurdities of the modern world.

**4.12.11. Sample Questions:**

1. Discuss Arnold's poetry as criticism of life.
2. Examine Arnold as a great poet and critic.
3. Write a note on T.S.Eliot's *The Waste Land*.
4. Estimate T.S.Eliot's contribution to poetic drama.

**4.12.12. Reference Books:**

1. R.J. Rees : *English Literature: An Introduction for Foreign Readers*.
2. William Long: *English Literature: Its History and its Significance*.
3. Ifor Evans: *A Short History of English Literature*.
4. S.P.Sherman: *Matthew Arnold, How to Know Him*.
5. George Williamson: *A Reader's Guide to T.S.Eliot*.
6. Helen Gardner: *The Art of T.S.Eliot*.

- **P.N.Suseela**

**Lesson- 4.13****THE ORIGIN OF LANGUAGE****4.13.1. Objective:**

The aim of the present lesson is to:

- ✦ let the student know the genesis of language and the early history of human language.
- ✦ describe the various theories built around the origin of language.
- ✦ illustrate the significance of language.

**STRUCTURE**

- 4.13.2. Introduction**
- 4.13.3. Characteristics of language**
- 4.13.4. Theories of the Origin of Language**
  - a. The Bow-Wow Theory**
  - b. The Pooh-Pooh Theory**
  - c. The Ding-Dong Theory**
  - d. The Yo-He-Ho Theory**
  - e. The Gesture Theory**
  - f. The Musical Theory**
  - g. The Contact Theory**
  - h. The Ma-ma Notion**
  - i. The Pa-pa Notion**
- 4.13.5 Summary**
- 4.13.6 Technical Terms**
- 4.13.7 Sample Questions**
- 4.13.8 Suggested Reading**

**4.13.2. Introduction:**

Language is not a natural phenomenon: It is a creation of man's social needs. **The Oxford English Dictionary** defines the word 'Language' as: "*The whole body of words and of methods of combination of words used by a nation, people, or race; a 'tongue'*". The use of word 'tongue' in this definition reminds us that the language exists in spoken as well as written forms. The word

**language** itself is used in many ways. We may speak of 'the English Language', 'the language of mathematics' or rather illogically perhaps, we may refer to 'deaf- and- dumb' language. When we refer to the Morse code as 'a language of dots and dashes' or talk about the 'dancing languages of bees' it is clear that we are using the word 'language' in different ways. One of the best known language definitions is: "Language is a purely human and non- instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols. These symbols are in the instance, auditory and they are produced by the so- called organs of speech" (Sapir).

We do not even know with certainty when language actually arose, it seems likely that it goes back to the earliest history of man, perhaps over a million years. It appears that speech developed as 'tool making' and the earliest forms of specifically human co-operations.

### 4.13.3. Characteristics of Language:

The gift of language is the single human trait which makes us separate from other members of the animal kingdom. Language is like nest-building or hive-making, the universal and biologically specific activity of human beings. We engage in it communally, compulsively and automatically. We cannot be human without it. Language is something we know and speak and write. Then immediately a question arises as to why study language? To a language student, the question is as pointless and irrational as asking a philatelist why he bothered to collect stamps. The answer is that it is a matter of one's individual taste and sensibility and no amount of reasoning about applications can get around this.

Language is a fascinating aspect of human behavior. People are tempted to learn and take delight in studying it from various points of view. What is the origin of language? Why do men speak differently? What is the origin of words? What is the reason behind the heterogeneity of languages? Are the various languages spoken on the global surface basically the same? Before setting out to make a study of the development of the English language over the past fifteen hundred years or more, there are some elementary facts concerning language in general:

1. Like any other living creatures, human beings depend on the air, water and earth around them and in the similar way society depends upon language for its very existence.
2. Language is primarily something that is spoken, not written. 'Spoken form' or 'speech' is the earliest form of any language.
3. By means of speech we are giving an external symbol to inner language. So the spoken form is only a system of outer symbols to what is in our minds in the form of thoughts, feelings or wishes.
4. Sounds are symbols and letters are the symbols of those sounds, thus twice removed from the original inner language. So the written language is secondary and derivative.
5. In the life of each individual speech is learnt before writing and the same was true in the history of mankind in general.
6. Another important fact is that language is a gift or the distinguishing characteristic of man that differentiates man from other animals.
7. Other animals communicate with one other by means of cries. But animal sounds are not articulate and they lack the immense variety which is the chief characteristic feature of the sounds made by man.



8. The number of sound signals that animals can make is limited. But in human language the number of possible utterances is infinite.
9. Human language uses vocal sounds. So speech can be defined as 'an expression of thought or feeling by means of intentional and meaningful sounds produced by vocal organs'.

#### **Some important definitions of language:**

- Language is a set of utterances constituting a self-contained system acceptable to the members of the entire community.
- Language is a system of conventional vocal signs by means of which human beings communicate.
- A system of arbitrary vocal symbols by which thought is conveyed from one human being to another.
- Language is a system of communication by vocal sounds among human beings.
- Language is a system of arbitrary and conventional vocal symbols by means of which human beings communicate and co operate with one another.

#### **4.13.4. Theories of the Origin of Language:**

There are many theories about the origin of language, based on various indirect evidences: the language of children, the language in the primeval society, the kinds of variations which have taken place in language in the course of recorded history, the behaviour traits of higher animals like chimpanzees, and also of people suffering from speech defects. These are some of the bases or evidences that may provide us with useful indications.

The expressive noises, signals and gestures of the apes explain how man started in his creation of language. In the earliest times, language changed more slowly than in historical times. It took man about a million years to come off from the Old Stone Age, to the material culture of the Middle and New Stone Ages. Again it took another five thousand years or so to come up to the Bronze Age and about one thousand years to form the Iron Age. Since the industrial age, the pace of change has been dizzying. Under some influences of generic expression the primitives tended to have words for the specific events or situations of life. According to C. L. Barber the following seven theories explain the genesis of language.

**a. The Bow-Wow Theory:** This theory traces the connection between the sound and the word. Supporters of this theory argue that words are directly imitative of natural sounds and maintain that they form the core of vocabulary and thereby the basis of language. They also argue that a child, while learning a language, tries to reproduce the characteristic sound of an animal or a bird and refers to it by its characteristic sound. Thus the child refers to the dog as bow-wow, the cat as mew-mew and the cow as mow-mow and so on.

For eg: Cuckoo, hiss, splash, sneeze, bang, quack, peewit, grunt, bump, rustle etc.

But concept of this theory that human speech arose in imitation of animal cries is perhaps the weakest of the suggestions, for, while animals can roar, growl, whimper, purr, and whine, incipient men could no doubt make similar emotional sounds, and there seems no good reason to suppose that they learned speech from creatures with smaller and less complex brains.

As Bertrand Russell phrased the objection, no matter how eloquently a dog may bark, he cannot tell you that his parents were poor but honest. While admitting the fact that the onomatopoeic or echoic element has played an important part in the coinage of many words, one cannot explain the large variety of other words whose sounds do not echo the sense. This theory can be dismissed as an incomplete and imperfect explanation of how language obtained its articulate structure.

**b. The Pooh-Pooh Theory:** Jean Jacques Rousseau in the middle of the eighteenth century propounded this theory. According to him the early man must have used both emotive cries and gestures. Later he realized that gestures could not be used while engaged in manual labour and invented language. The theory came to be called 'Pooh-Pooh' theory because of the principle behind it — a cry developing into a word. 'Pooh-Pooh' at first was only a cry implying disgust; gradually it acquired the status of a word with definite meaning.

According to this theory, language had its origin from the spontaneous utterances, instinctive emotional cries of a primitive man like anger, joy, fear, surprise pleasure, wonder, triumph, and pain etc. These expressive gestures are naturally accompanied by appropriate sounds and gradually the symptom becomes the symbol. This theory holds further that those earliest linguistic utterances, interjections or exclamations are expressive of some emotional state of the mind of primitive man. It is easy to imagine how a cry of fear could become a signal of danger in primitive community as among other animals. But how did articulation develop from mere expressive cries? This theory does not explain how the gulf is bridged between an emotional cry and its articulated symbol.

**c. The Ding-Dong Theory:** This is a nickname for what is usually known as the 'nativistic theory'. This theory is associated with the German scholar and philologist, Max Mueller. It is based on supposed harmony between sound and sense in language. According to this theory, language was man's expression of the external impressions on him. Every external impression he received was like the sound of a bell(ding dong) and produced corresponding utterance. This theory would thus connect the origin of speech with the same impulse which later gave rise to the savage war-dance, the medieval ballads, etc. Initially a rudimentary attempt at imitation could have resulted, which later developed into a meaningful sequence of sounds. This theory is not convincing chiefly because it relies too much on the hypothetical instinctive faculty of primitive man, rather than on more solid ground of evidence.

**d. The Yo-He-Ho Theory :** Some nineteenth century scholars like Noire put forward this theory. According to this theory language arose out of the rhythmic grunts of men working together. Involuntary sounds are made when people are engaged in strenuous physical labour such as lifting a log of wood, moving a tree trunk, felling a tree or turning a rock, bear at bay, men hauling a great log to hew out a boat, etc. Such cries are the result of stopping the air stream at one point and releasing suddenly. This would result in the production of consonant-like and vowel-like sounds. Vocal noises of this kind might have developed into words. This idea was accepted by the Soviet aphasiologist A.R.Luria in 1970. He says that "*There is every reason to believe that speech originated in productive activity.*" This theory is significant for two reasons: i) It gives a plausible explanation for production of the earliest consonants and vowels; ii) It envisages the origin of language in a situation involving human co-operation and communal labour with adequate motivation.

This theory too has its weak points. It presupposes co-operative activity of human beings, which would not have been possible in primitive community without the prior existence of language.

It has been argued against the theory that language must have existed long before primitive man was brought into a situation involving communal co-operation. So this theory puts the cart before the horse in spite of the validity that it explains the origin of vocal sounds.

**e. The Gesture Theory:** According to this theory speech was preceded by gestures. Supporters of this theory point to the extensive use of gestures by some animals and by some primitive tribes. For example, a Chimpanzee makes signals and expresses its feelings by its body movements as well as by vocal noises. Perhaps the same can be said of the earliest speech of the primitive man. Sir Richard Paget and Prof. Alexander Johanneson suggest that the primitive man initially communicated through gestures. We can observe gestures and facial expressions effectively used for communication in the ancient art form of *Indian Bharata Natyam* and *Kathakali*. While it is credible that the gesture and speech are closely related, the theory does not take us beyond that. It appears more probable that the speech and gestures grew up together for even in modern times we use gestures to supplement our vocal expressions. An extreme version of gesture theory holds the view that language came into existence as recently as about 2500 BC.

A variant of this theory is the **Mouth gesture theory**. Supporters of this theory argue that primitive man used gestures in communication and as his intelligence and technique developed he needed more precise gestures. At the very outset mouth and hands were separately or jointly employed to gesticulate. Afterwards he discovered that the mouth was capable of making sounds besides gestures. Supporters of this theory analyze various words in terms of mouth gestures. Though some of the aspects of this theory are amusing and fanciful, it has the virtue of accounting for the articulated nature of speech.

**f. The Musical Theory:** The Danish linguist Otto Jespersen propounded this theory. This theory holds that language came from song. Looking down a hillside to a lush valley watered by a limpid stream, all graced by the warming sun, man in exuberant spirits burst into exultant or thankful sound. A sort of primitive yodeling soon became a signal to fellow-tribesman or mate on the opposite hill. The Greeks accepted this idea of the origin of speech. Jespersen cited the examples of primitive language with long and cumbersome words, which were difficult to pronounce. Moreover the frequent use of tone pitch and musical intervals made it even more difficult to utter. He believes that it was musical, passionate and very irregular and it dealt with the concrete rather than with the abstract. Its earliest form was a song, which was merely expressive, but not communicative. His view seems to be quite romantic. Jespersen says, "Language was born in the courting days of mankind ; the first utterances of speech I fancy to myself were something between the nightly love-lyrics of Puss up on the tiles and the melodious love songs of the nightingale". Like any other theory, this theory is untenable in the absence of historical knowledge of a large number of world's languages.

**g. Contact Theory:** Prof. G. Kevesz, a former professor of psychology at Amsterdam, advanced this theory. He contends that language arises through individual need for contact with his fellow men. According to this theory, language grew in several stages. At first contact sound was made which was not communicative, but merely expressive of one's need for contact with his fellows; for e.g., noises made by gregarious animals. In the second stage came the cry which was directed to the environment in general; for e.g., the mating calls and cries of young nestlings in danger. In the third stage came the call directed to an individual, demanding for satisfaction of some urge; for e.g., domestic animal begging for food and infant crying for its mother. In the fourth stage came the word with its symbolic function after human acts and thought.

It appears that this theory suffers because it places undue emphasis on the instinctive need for contact as a motive for the invention of language. Moreover the theory does not explain anything about how language acquired articulation.

Besides the above seven theories forwarded by C.L.Barber, another linguist Joseph T. Shipley stated two more notions to explain the origin of language. They are the '*Ma-ma Notion*' and the '*Pa-pa Notion*'.

**h: The Ma-ma Notion :** The Ma-ma notion claims that the speech faculty is given, not derived; it is innate. In India, the god Indra is credited with inventing speech, and myths around the word make similar attributions. Socrates declared that the gods named things in the proper way. Words were thus holy; from this sprang the relation of *nomen et omen*: knowledge of the name gave power over the thing named. Even today, the [orthodox] Jews do not use the hidden name of their God. Words may have magic power: Ali Baba's "Open sesame" opened the cave of the forty thieves. "*Solomon knew the names of all the spirits, and having their names, he held them subject to his will.*" (William James)

Those accepting the idea of an innate capacity for speech without attributing its existence to a god, assume a natural development, such as the pursing lips of the suckling babe, which seem to form a *m-m-m*. This sound of course comes close to us in *mamma – mother, Mutter, mater, mere*, and all the suckling *mammals*.

**i. The Pa-pa Notion:** The Pa-pa notion relies on the simple method of trial and error. There was a need to communicate — and language emerged. Difficult or inappropriate sounds were sloughed; communication struggled through. This idea has at least the added attraction that it is the second step in all the other hypotheses. However language may have started, this is how it grew, and still is growing.

It is clear by now that with all this welter of theories no final word can be said about the origin of language. Inevitably, we remain in the realm of possible speculation and interesting guesses. It may be admitted that the Gesture theory and Yo-he-ho theory come nearer to the truth than the other theories. Each of these theories has its virtues and claims. Yet none provides a comprehensive, all-inclusive satisfactory explanation about the mysterious origin of the miracle of language. After much futile discussion, wisdom dawned on the linguists and they reached the conclusion that the available data yields little or no evidence about the origin of language.

#### 4.13.5. Summary:

It is interesting to turn to the problem of the origin and early history of human language. All of us realize and accept the fact that the basic unanswered question about language is how it came to be. We are deeply ignorant about the origin of language and we have to be content with some plausible speculations and guesses as to how speech began. Scholars like C. L. Barber, Joseph T. Shipley and others built up various theories or notions around the problem of the origin of human language; for example, *The Bow-Wow Theory, The Pooh- Pooh Theory, The Ding – Dong Theory, The Yo-He-Ho Theory, The Gesture Theory, The Musical Theory, The Contact Theory, The Ma-Ma Theory, The Pa-Pa Theory* etc. Each of these has many scornful critics, and the methods have been given names by the mockers. While a germ of truth may lie within each of these notions, there is no device to probe prehistory and establish how the first speakers achieved meaningful word forms. To check unending argument, in 1866 the Linguistic Society of Paris ruled that its members stop indulging in no further speculation as to the origin of language.

#### 4.13.6. Technical Terms

1. genesis: the origin of something, when it is begun or starts to exist
2. utterance: something that someone says
3. arbitrary : based on chance rather than being planned or based on reason
4. articulate: pronounce; able to express thoughts and feelings easily and clearly, or showing this quality
5. vocal : relating to or produced by the voice in speaking
6. gesture: a movement of the hands, arms or head, etc. to express an idea or feeling
7. linguistic: connected with language or the study of language.
8. presuppose: to think that something is true in advance without having any proof
9. linguist: someone who studies languages or can speak them very well.
10. yodeling: to sing by making a series of very fast changes between the natural voice and a much higher voice
11. gregarious: (of people) liking to be with other people, or (especially of animals) living in groups.

#### 4.13.7. Sample Questions:

1. Discuss the chief theories concerning the origin of language.
2. Comment briefly on the validity of the theories concerning the origin of language.
3. Give an account of the theories concerning the origin of language.

#### 4.13.8. Suggested Reading

1. Jean Aitchison,,: ***The Seeds of Speech: Language Origin and Evolution***
2. A.C. Baugh,,: ***A History of language***
3. David Crystal,,: ***Linguistics***
4. Charlton Laird: ***The Miracle Of Language***
5. Simeon Potter: ***Our Language***
6. C.L. Wrenn: ***The English Language***
7. H.C. Wyld. : ***The Growth of Language***

- P.Naga Suseela,

**Lessons- 4.14****INDO-EUROPEAN FAMILY OF LANGUAGES  
AND THE DESCENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE****4.14.0. Objectives:**

The aim of the present lesson is to:

- give an overall view of the Indo-European family of languages.
- describe briefly the Germanic languages and the place of the English language
- show how English is descended from the West Germanic branch.
- explain in detail the First Consonant Shift: Grimm's Law & Verner's Law

**STRUCTURE:**

- 4.14.1. Introduction
- 4.14.2. The Indo-European Family
- 4.14.3. Satem Group
- 4.14.4. Centum Group
- 4.14.5. The Germanic Languages
  - 4.14.5. a. Grammar
  - 4.14.5. b. Vocabulary
  - 4.14.5. c. Phonology
- 4.14.6. Grimm's Law
- 4.14.7. Verner's Law
- 4.14.8. Summary
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- 4.14.10. Sample Questions
- 4.14.11. Suggested Readings

**4.14.1. Introduction**

*“By ethnic origin the English are a mongrel breed. Their language is polyglot, drawn from a variety of sources, and its vocabulary has been augmented by importations from all over the world. The English language does not identify the English, for it is the main language of Wales, Scotland, Ireland, many Commonwealth countries, and the United States. The primary source of the language, however, is the main ethnic stem of the English, the Anglo-Saxons, who invaded and colonized England in the 5th and 6th centuries. Their language provides about half the words in modern English vocabulary.”*

**-Encyclopaedia Britannica.**

In the remote past when man was nomadic in habit, the primitive tribes around the Black Sea spoke a language, which has been called by philologists Aryan, Indo-Germanic and Indo-European. It not only indicates the geographical extent to which it spread but also gives prominence to Asian and European groups of languages. The nomadic tribes later split up into various groups and moved in different directions in search of food and shelter. Each of the groups took with it their common language but due to the long lapse of time and change of place their languages became dialects and later into distinct independent languages. The present multiplicity of languages is due to repeated differentiation through the ages. It is very possible to identify certain common features among the resultant languages. These similarities indicate that all these languages were one in the past. Let us examine the salient features of the Indo-European family of languages and its branches.

#### 4.14.2. Indo-European Family of Languages:

We do not have first hand knowledge about the original Indo-European language. But by the comparative study of its surviving descendents, it is possible to form a fair idea of the characteristics. The Indo-European language was a synthetic language. It had a complex system of inflexional endings. Centuries later the language acquired analytical tendencies. The vocabulary of the Indo-European language was limited to serve the needs of the primitive, aboriginal tribes who spoke it. In most of the modern European languages the singular personal pronouns bear a very close resemblance. Indo-European languages have common words for the primary family relationships like father, brother, mother etc. One of the important resemblances in the ancient languages and their modern descendents is found in the cardinal numbers up to ten.

The Indo-European family can be split into eight chief branches. They are sub-divided into two groups: **the Eastern Group** and **the Western Group**. **The Eastern Group** consists of the 'Satem' languages i.e., **Indo-Iranian, Armenian, Albanian** and **Balto-Slavic**. The Western Group includes the 'Centum' languages i.e., **Hellenic, Italic, Celtic** and **Germanic**. The classification of Eastern and Western groups is based on certain common features shared by the languages of each group.





### 4.14.3. Satem Group:

**4.14.3.i. Indo-Iranian:** This branch is also known as *Aryan* because the ancient people who spoke it called themselves *Aryans*, which means the 'noble ones'. This branch has two groups the *Indian* and the *Iranian*.

**Indian:** *Sanskrit*, the literary language, and *Prakrit*, from which most of the North Indian languages have descended, belong to the Indian branch. This branch of the Indo – European family has preserved for us the oldest literary texts, the Vedas, written in Vedic Sanskrit. A later form of language was fixed and given a literary form by the Indian grammarian, Panini. Classical Sanskrit is the medium of a rich variety of literature, a wealth of dramaturgy, lyric poetry, and the two national epics, *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharatha*. A large number of colloquial dialects known as Prakrits existed besides Sanskrit. One of them, *Pali*, was given literary status, which was the language of Buddhism in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Prakrit gave rise to Apabramsa, which in turn gave rise to the present North Indian languages; For example, *Hindi*, *Bengali*, *Marathi*, *Punjabi*, *Romani* etc.

**Iranian:** The Iranian branch is the mother of *Persian*, *Pushtu* (Afghan), *Avestan* (the language of Zoroastrians) etc. The earliest recorded language of this group is Avestan, the language of Avesta, the sacred writings of Zoroastrians. Some of these writings went back to 1000 B.C. Avestan has left no direct descendents. But it is related to Old Persian which was preserved in inscriptions. A later form of this language is called *Pahlavi* or *Middle Iranian* from which modern *Persian* is descended. *Persian* is spoken throughout a large part of Iran. Other languages belonging to this group are Kurdish, the language of Eastern Turkey, Iraq, and Western Iran; *Balochi*, the language of Baluchistan and *Pashto*, the language of Afghanistan.

**4.14.3.ii. Armenian:** The Armenian branch of languages is found in a small area south of Caucasus mountains and the eastern end of the Black Sea. The earliest records of Armenian are preserved in a Bible translation of the fifth century A.D. It stands alone as a separate branch of Indo-European family. Throughout their long troubled history the Armenians have preserved their individuality and not allowed themselves to be dominated by the imperial rulers of Persia, Rome and Byzantium. Modern Armenian had absorbed many loan words from the neighbouring languages, especially Iranian. About four million people in the southern Caucasus and Eastern Turkey speak it.

**4.14.3.iii. Albanian:** We have recorded information of Albanian from the eleventh century AD. It is the smallest of the eight surviving branches of the Indo- European family. Only one and a half million people speak it and they reside in the Northwest part of Greece. It might have descended from ancient Illyrian. But the evidence is insufficient for certainty. Albanian contains a large number of loan words from neighboring languages like Turkey. It is wrapped in history and we do not have intimate knowledge of it except for some legal documents. No literature earlier than the seventeenth century has survived.

**4.14.3. iv. Balto-Slavonic:** This branch comes from Eastern Europe. It consists of two groups. 1) the Baltic and 2) the Slavonic. These two groups have sufficient features in common to justify their descendants from the same branch.

The Baltic language includes *Lithuanian*, *Lettic* and *Old Prussian*. Of these *Lithuanian* is important to the student of Indo- European because its conservative nature has preserved some old features that have disappeared in all the other members of the Indo- European family. Prussian died out in the seventeenth century having been replaced by German.

The Slavonic group includes *Russian, Polish, Czech, Bulgarian, Serbo-Croatian* etc. The earliest form of Slavonic is known as Old Church Slavonic. It is still used as a liturgical language in some of the orthodox churches.

#### 4.14.4. Centum Group (Western):

**4.14.4.i. Hellenic:** This branch includes various Greek dialects, which are spoken in the islands of the Aegean Sea, in Asia Minor and in Ancient Greece. The appropriate date of these dialects (based on recent discoveries) is fixed around the fifteenth century B.C. We have abundant literature and a large mass of inscriptions and documents in the dialect of *Attic* (the dialect of the city of Athens) which owed its supremacy to the dominant political and cultural position of Athens in the fifth century B.C. After the death of Alexander the Great (323. B.C.), this dialect became the general language of Mediterranean countries. It was used in the New Testament and was used by Homer, Aeschylus, and Euripides in their creative writings. Modern Greek has only eight million speakers. A spoken variety called Democratic Greek is now used in Cyprus, Turkey and in some parts of the United States. The dialects of Modern Greece are descended from this group.

**4.14.4.ii. Italic:** The languages of this group present a larger collection of recorded evidence than any other branch of Indo-European. We have evidence that as early as the 6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C., a number of languages were spoken in Italy. Of all the languages spoken in those times, *Latin* became supremely important because of the political supremacy of Rome. The expansion of the Roman Empire spread *Latin* into many parts of Europe. The literary form of Latin is called *Classical Latin*. From the common form of Latin (Vulgar Latin) the Romanic languages like *French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Roumanian* and *Catalonian* are descended. These languages have been carried into different parts of the world.

**4.14.4.iii. Celtic:** This branch has many characteristics with the Italic branch. Celtic was widely in use in Western Europe in the first century B.C. At present it is found only in some remote corners of France and in the British Isles. The Celtic languages fall into three groups: *Gaelic, Brittanic* and *Gaulish*. The modern forms of Celtic are *Scottish, Irish, Welsh, and Cornish, Manx* and *Breton*.

**4.14.4.iv. Germanic (Teutonic):** The branch of Indo-European to which English belongs is called Germanic. It is also called Teutonic because the Teutonic races like Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Dutch, Germans and Scandinavians originally spoke it. This language group includes languages such as *German, Dutch, Flemish, Frisian, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, and Icelandic*. All these languages are descended from one parent language, a branch of Indo-European, often called Proto-Germanic/ Primitive Germanic/ Common Germanic/ Teutonic. At the beginning of the Christian era, the speakers of Proto-Germanic who lived in the North of Europe formed a homogeneous cultural and linguistic group. We do not have any evidence of the language of this period but we know something of the people who spoke it from the works of Tacitus. He calls them Germans and describes them as a tribal society living in scattered settlements in the woody and marshy country of Northern Europe. It is essentially an agricultural community keeping flocks and growing grain crops. The family is the basic unit of social organization among them. They are monogamous and women are held in high esteem in their society. They love war because it is often a means to renown and booty. In the course of time, due to over population and the poverty of their natural resources they spread in different directions.

By the beginning of the Christian era, the Germanic group began to split. As a result of the expansion of the Germanic group, different dialects sprang up. There are three main branches in the Proto-Germanic. They are : i) North Germanic, ii) East Germanic, iii) West Germanic. Modern Scandinavian languages like Norwegian, Swedish, Danish and Icelandic belong to the North Germanic branch. Burgundian, Vandal and Gothic tongues (Visi-Gothic and Astro-Gothic) belong to the East Germanic dialects of Proto-Germanic. Of all the dialects the West Germanic dialect is the most important one because English, German, Frisian, Flemish and Dutch are descended from this branch.

#### 4.14.5. The Germanic Languages:

About 450 million people speak the Germanic languages on every continent. Most people speak English, but German, Dutch and even the Scandinavian languages remain spoken in former colonies all over the world. Afrikaans is actually a variety of Dutch spoken in South Africa, and Flemish is the form of Dutch spoken in Belgium. Faroese is spoken in the Faroes Islands, and Frisian (spoken in the Netherlands) is the language that is the most closely related to English. However, out of the five major languages in this branch, Dutch is akin to English. Now let us examine the general characteristic features of all these languages in general.

- a) Simplification of the inflectional system
- b) Strong and weak forms of adjectives
- c) A dental suffix for the past tense.
- d) Fixing of the stress on the initial syllable
- e) A common distinctive vocabulary
- f) Consonantal changes

**4.14.5.a. Grammar:** The stress of words is primarily on the first syllable, and several vowel shifts separate the Germanic languages from other Indo-European languages. Originally, there were three numbers (singular, plural, dual), three genders (masculine, feminine, neuter), and four noun cases (nominative, accusative, dative, genitive) but these only remain in German (minus the dual) and Icelandic. Word order in German is less strict because of the cases, but it is also much more complicated because of the verb final position in subordinate clauses. *Dutch* has combined the three genders into common and neuter, common being the former masculine and feminine. English has no genders or noun cases except for changes among a few personal pronouns; as well as strong and weak verbs, there are also strong and weak adjectives that decline before nouns.

German retains most of the Proto-Germanic language, but is least like the other languages in its group. Consequently, it is the most difficult to learn. The noun cases are easier than those of the Slavic languages, but they still give English speakers several problems. But German is the most used language among the eastern countries of Europe, so it can be used as a *lingua franca* (link language) in Slavic-speaking areas.

*Dutch* is much easier to learn than German, but many people dismiss this language because the Netherlands is no longer a world power. The verbs are less complicated, as well as word order, and the vocabulary even sounds more like English. When you learn Dutch, you will also be



able to communicate with those who speak Afrikaans in South Africa, as well as some Indonesians who have learned Dutch as a result of centuries of colonial rule.

*Norwegian, Swedish and Danish* are also very easy for English speakers to learn. Like Dutch, they use two genders (except some dialects of Norwegian, which retain the feminine), but verbs only change for tense (and not person) and word order is much like English. Definite articles attach to the end of the noun (as in Roumanian). *Swedish and Norwegian* are tonal languages, so, the accent on a syllable can distinguish meaning between words. These accents give the languages a “singing” quality, but also make it harder for English speakers to learn pronunciation correctly. These three languages are said to be mutually intelligible, meaning they can be considered dialects of one language. However, it is often hard for Swedes and Danes to communicate with each other, but not so hard for either to communicate with Norwegians.

#### 4.14.5. b. Vocabulary:

One-third of the vocabulary of the Germanic languages is not of Indo-European origin. A good number of words are peculiar to Germanic and they have no certain correspondences in other Indo-European languages, e.g. *boat, keel, float, see, sail, stay, ship, sheet* etc. Since other Indo-European languages have no words corresponding to these they developed the nautical words. The earliest records of Germanic are from Gothic, especially in the translation of the ***New Testament*** made in the 4th century by Ulfilas (Bishop of the Goths) among the words peculiar to Germanic are: ***rain, hold, wife, meat, drive, wheat*** etc. Gothic cognates of English include ***light*** and ***find***. The presence of such words strengthen the concept that the original Indo-Europeans lived inland. The Germanic branch that moved away from them might have reached the coast and ventured into the sea.

The Proto-Germanic people borrowed a good number of words from the Celts and the Romans. The Celts were skilled in metallurgy and the Germanic words ***iron*** and ***lead*** were borrowed from them. The Romans contributed to the Germanic languages words related to war, trade, building and food. So words like *wall, tile, chalk, mill, cheap, pond, pepper, peas, plum, apple* etc. seem to show that the Germanic tribes were much impressed by concrete manifestations of Roman civilization rather than by Roman law. With the expansion of the Germanic people, dialectal differences arose. This led to the emergence of three distinct divisions of Germanic: North Germanic, East Germanic and West Germanic.

High German and Low German derive their respective names from their corresponding distance to the sea. High German at present is the official language of Germany. Modern English has similarities with Frisian and Low German languages. Dutch and English have close resemblance and they have the same word for ***water***. Other words with little difference include ***twenty-twentic*** and ***wife- wif*** etc. Frisian and English are more akin to each other and it is believed that the Old English and Frisian were one speech. At present Frisian is found in the dialectal forms of Holland and the islands of the North Sea.

**4.14.6. c. Phonology:** At the time of its separation from the Proto-Indo-European language, Proto-Germanic had developed certain changes. One such change was in the matter of accent. There are two kinds of accent. (a) Musical accent – based on pitch or intonation; (b) Stress accent — based on the force or weight of utterance. Most probably the parent Indo-European language had musical accent. But in the languages descended from it the stress and accent

became predominant and free. (It could be used on different parts of the same word according to context and meaning). It is the general characteristic of Germanic languages to fix this stress on the first syllable of the word. When the first syllable of the word is stressed, the syllables at the end of the word will tend to be blurred in utterance and then lost completely.

#### 4.14.6. Grimm's Law or The First Sound Shift:

At the time of emergence of Proto-Germanic from Proto-Indo-European, the consonant system of the Proto-Indo-European underwent great changes. The most important of the changes is called **The First Sound Shifting** or **Grimm's Law**. Jacob Grimm with the help of Rask, a Danish philologist, analyzed the sound changes in 1822. Grimm's Law, the principle of relationships in Indo-European languages, was first formulated by Jacob Grimm and was a continuing subject of interest and investigation to 20<sup>th</sup> century linguists. It shows that a process—the regular shifting of consonants in groups—took place once in the development of English and the other Low German languages and twice in German and the other High German languages. The first sound shift, affecting both English and German, was from the early phonetic positions documented in the ancient, or classical, Indo-European languages (Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin) to those still evident in the Low German languages, including English; the second shift affected only the High German languages, e.g., Standard German.

The following are the important features of Grimm's Law:

According to Grimm's law, the Indo-European aspirated voiced stops **bh, dh, gh** lost their aspiration and became voiced stops, **b, d, g**. The voiced stops fell together with the original voiced stops of Indo-European and became voiceless stops **p, t, k**. The voiceless stops again fell together with the original voiceless stops of Indo-European and then became voiceless fricatives **f, th, h** in the Germanic languages. Again by applying Verner's Law in certain words, philologists found out that the voiceless fricatives once again became aspirated voiced stops. These sound changes are explained in the above figure. For the sake of language students, a more detailed explanation of Grimm's Law is given below with adequate examples from Sanskrit and Latin.

**First series** Indo-European aspirated voiced stops **bh, dh, gh** became voiced stops **b, d, g** in Germanic languages.

(i)	bh, dh, gh	————>	b, d, g
		Sanskrit	English
	bh > b :	<b>b</b> hratar	> <b>b</b> rother
		<b>b</b> harani	> <b>b</b> ear
		<b>b</b> hedani	> <b>b</b> ite
	dh > d :	band <b>d</b> hana	> <b>d</b> ond
		wid <b>d</b> ava	> wid <b>d</b> ow
		mad <b>d</b> hya	> mid <b>d</b> le

gh > g : **gh**ostis > **g**uest  
 midha**gh**as > **dog**

**Second series:** Proto Indo- European voiced stops **b, d, g** became voiceless stops **p, t, k**.

(ii) b, d, g —————> p, t, k

Lithuanian English

b > p: slabu > sleep  
 dubas > deep

Sanskrit English

d > t : dant > teeth  
 pada > foot

Latin English

g > k : ger > acre  
ginus > kin

**Third series:** Proto Indo- European voiceless stops **p, t, k** became voiceless fricatives **f, th, h**.

(iii) p, t, k —————> f, th, h

Sanskrit English

P > f : pancha > five  
pacu > fee  
padam > foot

Sanskrit English

t > th : traya > three  
tvam > thou  
tanu > thin

Latin English

k > h :      **c**entum > **h**undred  
                   **c**ordum > **h**earth  
                   **c**anis > **h**ound

#### 4.14.7. Verner's Law:

There were certain sound changes in Germanic languages which could not be explained with reference to Grimm's Law. For example, in the Latin word 'centum' which became 'hundred' in English, the change from 'c' to 'h', is in accordance with Grimm's Law.

centum > hundred

**c > h ; t > d**

In the same word 't' was a stop consonant and should have become the voiceless fricative 'th' according to Grimm's Law. But it became 'd'. Hence it was necessary to modify Grimm's Law of *consonant shift*. Verner's brilliant hypothesis stated that the voiceless fricative consonants became voiced *if the vowel in the preceding syllable was unaccented*. He explained that the 'd' found in 'hundred' indicated that the Indo-European accent in the word was not on the vowel immediately preceding. By referring to the placement of stress, Verner accounted for certain exceptions to Grimm's Law. Other examples of this category are given below.

(i) According to Grimm's Law **t** in Latin **citra** should become **th** according to Grimm's law. But it became **d** in Old English **hider**—(simply because the first syllable of Latin word was not stressed. This is in accordance with Verner's Law).

(ii) According to Verner's law, Indo-European **p, t, k** when preceded by an originally unaccented vowel, became **b, d, g**. For example, Latin **frater** became Old English -à **brother** (in accordance with Grimm's Law) **mater** and **pater** became Old English -à **moder** and **fader** (this is an exception to Grimm's law)

In Latin **mater** and **pater** carried stress on the second syllable and so according to Verner's Law, **t** went a step further and became **d** in Old English **moder** and **fader**.

<b>Latin</b>	<b>O.E.</b>	<b>Mod.Eng</b>
Mater	moder	mother
Pater	fader	father

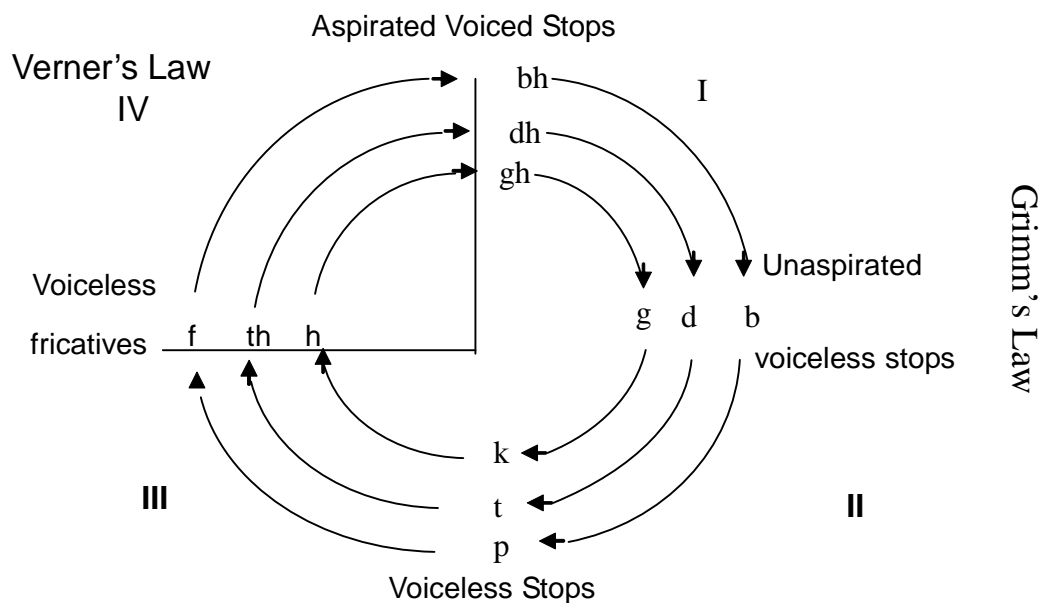
It must be noted that these words became **mother** and **father** not because of operation of any of these laws, but perhaps because of analogy with **brother**.

Verner's Law also explains how the voiceless 's' became voiced 'z' and then went a step further and became 'r' in some words descending from the same root. Thus **as** (to be) was the root of **is** and **are** (**as** à **is, are**); **wes** was the root of **was** (with z sound), and **were** (with 'r' sound) (**wes** à **was, were**); **ris-an** (to rise with 's' sound) was the root of **raise** (with z sound), and **rear** (with r sound.) (**ris-an** à **raise, rear**)



Verner's Law is remarkable because it succeeds where Grimm's Law seems to fail.

We are not certain when these consonant changes in Germanic languages took place. Probably they began around 1000 B.C. and took a whole millennium to complete. Strictly speaking, we should not take all these changes as laws. To call them laws is to give them an authority, which they do not have. These sound changes may never repeat again in future. One thing to note is that we are not sure whether the information is accurate and elaborate because basically the sounds in Proto-Indo-European and Proto-Germanic are only inferred and reconstructed sounds.



#### 4.14.8. Summary:

*Indo-European* is the name given to the parent language from which nearly all European languages including the languages of Persia and India have descended. The Indo-European family is split into eight chief branches, which can be broadly divided into Satem group and Centum group. The Satem group consists of *Indo-Iranian*, *Armenian*, *Albanian*, *Balto-Slavonic*. The Centum group includes *Celtic*, *Italic*, *Hellenic* and *Proto-Germanic*. *Proto-Germanic* is the most important branch. This group consists of three sub-branches: *West Germanic*, *North Germanic* and *East Germanic*. The North Germanic sub-division includes the *Scandinavian* languages and the East Germanic covers the *Gothic* tongues. The present day *English* is derived from *West Germanic*.

Grimm's Law is an important landmark in Comparative Linguistics. It is of extraordinary utility in the derivation of words. It is based upon a comparative examination of many sets of forms from older Indo-European languages like *Greek*, *Latin* and *Sanskrit*, with forms from Germanic languages like *English*. **Verner's Law** is useful to

explain certain exceptions, limitations and irregular tendencies of sound change that were unexplained by Grimm's Law.

#### 4.14.9. Technical Terms:

nomadic : herdsman

philologist : one who studies language especially its history and development

dialect : a form of language that people speak in a particular part of the country

colloquial : informal and more suitable for use in speech than in writing

inflectional : a change in or addition to the form of a word

aspiration : the sound represented in English by the letter 'h', in words such as 'house'

aboriginal tribes: describes a person or living thing that has existed in a country or continent since the earliest time known to people

linguistics : the systematic study of the structure and development of language in general or of particular languages

#### 4.14.10. Sample Questions:

1. Write a note on Indo-European family of languages.
2. What is Grimm's Law? Explain with examples.
3. Describe the Centum and Satem groups of the Indo-European family.
4. Write a note on the Indo-European family of languages and the descent of English Language.
5. Explain the importance of Verner's Law.
6. Comment on the importance of the Primitive Germanic consonant shift.
7. Trace the descent of English language.

#### 4.14.11. Suggested Readings:

1. C.L Wren: *The English Language*.
2. F.T Wood: *An Outline History of English Language*
3. Simeon Potter: *Our Language*
4. A.C Baugh.: *A History of the English Language*.
5. Emile Benveniste: *Indo-European Language and Society*

**Lesson – 4.20****FIGURES OF SPEECH****4.20.1. Objectives:**

The aim of the present lesson is to

- (i) bring out the importance of “figures of speech” in understanding language.
- (ii) make the student understand the difference between ordinary mode of speech and figurative speech.
- (iii) briefly describe the figures of speech.
- (iv) enable the student to identify the different types of figures of speech.

**Structure:**

- 4.20.2. Introduction**
- 4.20.3. Discussion: Types of Figures of Speech**
- 4.20.4. Summary**
- 4.20.4. Exercises**
- 4.20.5. Sample Questions**
- 4.20.6. Reference Books**

**4.20.2. Introduction:**

Figures were for long characterized as “ornaments” of literal language, but they are entirely integral to the functioning of language. In fact, they are indispensable, not only to poetry, but to all modes of fluid discourse.

Definition: “A figure of speech is a deviation from the ordinary use of words, in order to increase the effects.”

Figurative language deviates from what we apprehend as the standard significance of words, in order to achieve special meaning or effect. Words or group of words are used to give particular emphasis to an idea or sentiment. The special emphasis is typically accomplished by the user’s conscious deviation from the strict literal sense of a word or from the more commonly used form of word order or sentence construction. It is a mistake to believe that the figures of speech are simply devices by means of which stylists enrich their writings. They are in fact, a part of everyday speech.

Literal language, in its broadest sense, is distinguished from all figurative language, and signifies entire accordance with standard usage. In a more limited sense, “literal language” is distinguished only from the use of similes, metaphors and other figures of speech.

Since classical times, figurative language has often been divided into two classes:

- (i) “figures of thought” or tropes (meaning ‘turns’, ‘conversions’) in which words are used in a way that effects a decided change or extension in a standard meaning; and
- (ii) “figures of speech” or “rhetorical figures”, in which the departure from standard usage is not, primarily, in the meaning but in the order and rhetorical effect of the words.

This distinction is not a sharp one, nor do all critics agree in its application. For convenience, however, the most commonly identified and widely used “figures of speech” are listed here.

### 4.20.3. Discussion: Types of Figures of Speech

In this lesson we are going to deal with the following figures of speech with examples to illustrate them. They are:

1. Simile
2. Metaphor
3. Personification
4. Apostrophe
5. Climax
6. Anti-climax or Bathos
7. Hyperbole
8. Pun
9. Oxymoron
10. Synecdoche
11. Metonymy
12. Litotes
13. Zeugma
14. Epigram
15. Irony
16. Antithesis
17. Paradox
18. Onomatopoeia
19. Alliteration
20. Euphemism

Let us discuss them in detail.

**I. Simile:** The word “Simile” means “likeness”. It comes from the word Latin Similis meaning “like”, which means “likeness”. In a simile, comparison between two distinctly different things is

indicated by the word “like” or “as” or “as – so”. “A simile is a comparison between two “different” objects with at least one point of similarity.

Eg: “King Richard was as brave as a lion”.

There are, therefore, two essential elements in a “simile.”

- (i) The two objects or events which are compared must be different in kind.
- (ii) The point of likeness must not be too remote or uncertain; and must be stated distinctly.

In the above example, the comparison is made between “King Richard” and “a lion”. The point of similarity is ‘bravery’. Other examples are:

1. She sat like patience on a monument.
2. Shubha was silent and companionless as the noontide.
3. O my love’s like a red, red rose.

**II. Metaphor:** A Metaphor is a condensed simile, where the comparison is implied. In a metaphor, a word which in standard or literal usage denotes one kind of thing, quality or action is implied to another, in the form of a statement of identity instead of comparison.

- Eg: 1. Life is a dream.  
2. Variety is the spice of life.  
3. O my love is a red, red rose.

The metaphoric use of a verb occurs in Shakespeare’s Merchant of Venice. (v.i.54):

“How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank.”

(verb)

The metaphoric use of an adjective occurs in Andrew Marvell’s “The Garden”:

“Annihilating all that’s made  
To a green thought in a green shade”.

### III. Personification:

In this figure of speech Personification, from the Greek term ‘Prosopopeia’, human qualities are given to inanimate objects and abstract ideas. In other words, inanimate objects and abstract ideas or qualities are spoken of as if they were persons or human beings. Thus when we say – “The moon veiled her face” – we personify the moon. That is, we speak of the moon as if it were conscious of being capable of activity. Other examples are:

1. Sky lowered, and muttering thunder, some sad drops.  
Wept at completing of the mortal sin.

2. Death lays his icy hands on the rich and the poor.
3. Venice, the oldest child of liberty.

#### IV. Apostrophe:

An apostrophe is a direct address either to an absent person or to an abstract or inanimate entity. It is a direct address to lifeless things. Some inanimate thing or idea or dead or abstract person are addressed, as if it / he were present.

John Keats begins his “Ode on a Grecian Urn” by apostrophizing the Urn:

“Thou still unravished bride of quietness:”

Other examples are:

1. “Milton, thou shouldst be living at this hour.  
England hath need of thee.”
2. “O death! Where is thy sting?  
O grave! Where is thy victory?”
3. “Oh! Mountains, come and cover me.”

**V. Climax:** The Greek meaning of this word is “Ladder”. In this figure of speech, words or statements are arranged in the ‘ascending’ order. The sense rises by successive steps to what is more important and impressive. Some examples are:

- (1) Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed and a few to be chewed and digested.
- (2) A heart to resolve, a head to contrive, a hand to execute.
- (3) He came, he saw and he conquered.

#### VI. Bathos or Anti-Climax:

Bathos is the Greek word for ‘depth’. The word has been used in literature, for an unintentional descent, from the more impressive to the less impressive; often with a ludicrous or trivial effect. Anti-climax is sometimes used as an equivalent of bathos. However, Anti-climax denotes a writer’s intentional drop from the serious and elevated to the trivial and lowly in order to achieve a comic or satiric effect. In this figure of speech, words or statements are arranged in the descending order. This is the opposite of climax and signifies a ludicrous descent from the higher to the lower. Some examples are:

1. He has great power, wealth and a snub nose.
2. The king appoints ministers, addresses parliament and takes a cup of tea.
3. The soldier fights for glory and a shilling-a-day.

**VII. Hyperbole or Exaggeration:**

Hyperbole in Greek means “overshooting; it “is bold overstatement, or extravagant exaggeration of fact used either for serious or comic effect. In this figure of speech we say ‘much more’ than what is real, for the sake of emphasis. It is a form of inordinate exaggeration according to which a person, or thing is depicted as being better or worse, or larger or smaller, than is actually the case. Examples are:

1. Dr. Johnson drank his tea in oceans.
2. Our college tower touches the sky.
3. His head was broken into thousand pieces.

**VIII. Pun:**

This consists in a play on the various meanings of a word and is used to cause humour, admiration or surprise. It is “a play on words that are identical in sound or similar in sound, but are sharply diverse in meaning.” Examples are:

1. A teacher trains the mind – A guard minds the train.
2. The leopard changes its spots, whenever it goes from one spot to another.
3. “Thou art Peter (Petros) and upon this rock (Petra) I will build my church.”

(St. Matthew 16:18)

**IX. Oxymoron:**

In New Latin and Greek, Oxymoron means ‘pointedly foolish’. If the paradoxical utterance combines two terms that in ordinary usage are contraries, it is called an “Oxymoron.” Thus Oxymoron is a term applied to a phrase which appears to be contradictory. For example:

“O death in life, the days that are no more.” – Tennyson.

Oxymoron was a familiar type of Petrarchan conceit in Elizabethan love poetry in phrases like: “Pleasing pains”; “I burn and freeze”; “loving hate”.

It is also a frequent figure in devotional prose and religious poetry, as a way of expressing the Christian mysteries, which transcend sense and logic. For example, see Milton’s description of the appearance of God in Paradise Lost Book III, 380:

“Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear”

Other examples are: “Starve with feeding”. “Bitter Sweet”.

**X. Synecdoche:**

This is a Greek word for “taking together”, or “to receive jointly.” Synecdoche is a figure of speech in which we use a word referring only to a part of something instead of the whole. Synecdoche means understanding one thing with another, that is, the use of a part for the whole, or the whole for a part, the species for the genus, and vice versa. Thus, in the phrase “Fifty head of

Cattle”, “head” is used to mean whole animals and the term “ten hands” stands for ten workmen. Examples are:

1. “The President’s Cabinet contained the best brains of the country.”  
(“brains” is used for intellectually brilliant people.)
2. The U.S. won three Gold Medals.  
(instead of “The members of the United States boxing team won three Gold Medals”.)
3. “Give us this day our daily bread”. (St. Matthew 6:11)

### **XI. Metonymy:**

This is a Greek word for “a change of name.” Substitution of one word for another, which it suggests is known as Metonymy or one thing is applied to another with which it has become closely associated in experience. Thus “The crown” or “the sceptre” can stand for a king. Examples are:

1. He was an avid reader of Chaucer.  
(Chaucer means poems of Chaucer).
2. I have read all of Milton.  
(“Milton” can signify the writings of Milton)
3. The hostess kept a good table.  
(good food is implied)

### **XII. Litotes:**

The Greek word litotes means “plain” or “simple”. Litotes is an understatement for intensification by denying the contrary of the thing being affirmed. It is an understatement employed for the purpose of enhancing the effect of the ideas expressed. Examples are:

1. The English poet Thomas Gray showed no inconsiderable powers as a prose writer.  
(means that Gray was in fact a very good prose witer.)
2. He is not the brightest man in the world.  
(means-he is a stupid)
3. War is not healthy for children and other living things.

### **XIII Zeugma:**

Zeugma in Greek means “Yoking”. In the most common present usage, it is applied to expressions in which a single word stands in the same grammatical relation to two or more other words, but with some alteration in its meaning from one instance to the next. To be brief, two different words are linked to a verb or an adjective which is strictly appropriate to only one of them. Examples are:



1. Obliged by hunger, and request of friends. - Pope.
2. Nor Mars his sword, nor war's quick fire shall burn.
3. The living record of your memory.

#### XIV. Epigram:

Originally the word 'epigram' meant in Greek "an inscription", but was extended to encompass any, very short poem, – whether amorous, elegiac, meditative, complimentary, anecdotal or satiric – which is polished, condensed and pointed. Often an epigram ends with a surprising or witty turn of thought. Examples are:

1. We take cunning for a sinister or crooked wisdom. - Francis Bacon
2. What is an Epigram? A dwarfish whole.  
Its body brevity, and wit its soul. - S.T. Coleridge.
3. On A Volunteer Singer  
"Swans sing before they die – 'twere no bad thing.  
Should certain people die before they sing!"  
(Epigram of Coleridge, to show that Romanticism did not preclude wit.)

#### XV. Irony:

Irony is saying one thing while meaning another. In short, Irony occurs when a word or phrase has one surface meaning and another different meaning beneath this surface. It is a mode of expression, through words (verbal irony) or events (irony of situation), conveying a reality different from and usually opposite to appearance or expectation. I.A. Richards defined Irony as an equilibrium of oppositions. Examples:

1. Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;  
And Brutus is an honourable man.  
Julius Caesar
2. He had but one eye, and the popular prejudice runs in favour of two  
The eye he had was unquestionably useful but decidedly not ornamental.  
Charles Dickens's Nicholas Nickelby referring to Mr. Squares.

#### XVI. Antithesis:

Antithesis is juxtaposition of two words, phrases, clauses, or sentences contrasted or opposed in meaning in such a way as to give emphasis to contrasting ideas. It is a contrast or opposition in meaning, emphasized by a parallel in grammatical structure. Examples are:

1. To err is human, to forgive divine. - Alexander Pope
2. Resolved to win, he meditates the way,

By force to ravish, or by fraud betray.

-Alexander Pope (The Rape of the Lock)

3. Marriage has many pains, but celibacy has no pleasures.

- Samuel Johnson's Rasselas

### **XVII. Paradox:**

A Paradox is a statement which seems on its face to be self-contradictory or absurd, yet turns out to have a valid meaning. Paradox is an assertion seemingly opposed to common sense, but that may yet have some truth in it. Examples are:

1. "One short sleep past, we wake eternally  
And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die."

- 'Death Be Not Proud' by Donne

2. "What a pity that youth must be wasted on the young". - G.B. Shaw.
3. "Mobilization for Peace".

### **XVIII. Onomatopoeia:**

Greek meaning of the word is - "to make a name"; Sometimes called 'echoism'. Onomatopoeia means the use of words to imitate natural sounds as accommodation of sound to sense. It is used both in a narrow and in a broad sense. In this figure, the sound of the word suggests the sense as meaning. "Onomatopoeia" is applied to a word, or combination of words, whose sound seems to resemble the sound it denotes like "hiss", "buzz", "rattle", "bang". More examples are:

1. Ding dong, ding dong, rang the bell.
2. Bow, bow, barked the dog.
3. The moan of doves in immemorial elms,  
And murmuring of innumerable bees.

"Come Down, O Maid"

- Tennyson.

### **XIX. Alliteration:**

In this figure of speech there is a repetition of the same letter or sound in sequence, in a single sentence. It is the repetition of speech sounds in a sequence of nearby words. Alliteration is the repetition of the initial sounds in two or more neighbouring words or syllables. It can also be referred to as head rhyme, or initial rhyme. Examples:

1. She sells sea shells on the sea shore
2. Betty bought bitter butter.
3. A man who marries money makes the most miserable mistake.

**XX. Euphemism:**

Euphemism comes from the Greek word “to speak well”. Euphemism is the description given to that figure of speech – by which one seeks to hide the real nature of something unpleasant or disagreeable – by giving it a less offensive or less direct name. There are certain words which have changed their meaning through being frequently used in this way. The more permanent ones are death, illness – subjects which cause a certain amount of pain or distress, if discussed in plain, direct terms. Examples are:

1. He passed away
  2. He is no more.
  3. The deceased was taken to hospital for post-mortem.
- } indicate death

Other examples are: “toilet” for “lavatory”; “undertaker” for “funeral undertaker”; “fatal” for “deadly”.

**4.20.4. Summary:**

A figure of speech is nothing but saying something in a remarkable way. It is a form of expression that intentionally deviates from the ordinary mode of speech for the sake of a more powerful or distinct effect. We observe some of the figures of speech like “simile” even in common everyday speech. As discussed above, it is a comparison between two objects, whereas “Metaphor” is a condensed simile. “Personification” is another mode of expressing our ideas by giving human qualities to inanimate objects. “Apostrophe” is a device to address a person who is usually either absent or deceased, an inanimate object, or an abstract idea. Milton in his poem *Il Penseroso*, invokes the spirit of melancholy. It is interesting to note that ancient Greek epigrams were inscriptions on tombs or statues. “Climax” and “Bathos” are contradictory to each other. “Hyperbole” is nothing but exaggeration, in other words, saying something more than what is real. Thomas Babington Macaulay wrote in his essay: “Dr. Johnson drank his tea in Oceans.” “Pun” is a play with words. “Paradox” is used by almost all poets, and it is a central device in Metaphysical poetry both in its religious and secular forms. “Onomatopoeia” is applied to words or combination of words or passages which seem to correspond to what they denote in any way whatever – in size, movement, or force, as well as sound. Alexander Pope recommends such extended verbal mimicry in his “Essay on Criticism” when he says “the sound should seem an echo of the sense”. “Irony” is a mode of expression, through words (verbal irony) or events (irony of situation), conveying a reality different from and usually opposite to appearance or expectation. For example, a ‘pickpocket’ does not expect his own pocket to be picked. Irony consists in the bringing in of the opposite, the complementary impulses. Thus all the figures have their importance and their own way of functioning in English literature. They are ornaments and they beautify the language.

From ancient times to the present, such figurative locutions have been extensively employed by orators and writers to strengthen and embellish their styles of speech and composition. However, figures must be used, economically; otherwise, people get bored if we use them constantly.

**4.20.5. Exercises:**

I. Identify the following figures of speech:

(1) Nature, herself at full moon like lovely Subha, was looking down on the sleeping earth.

- |              |           |     |
|--------------|-----------|-----|
| (a) Metaphor | (c) Pun   |     |
| (b) Simile   | (d) Irony | (b) |

2. He has a bicycle, a scooter and a car.

- |               |                 |     |
|---------------|-----------------|-----|
| (a) Hyperbole | (c) Anti-thesis |     |
| (b) Pun       | (d) Climax      | (d) |

3. The pen is mightier than the sword.

- |                  |               |     |
|------------------|---------------|-----|
| (a) Metaphor     | (c) Metonymy  |     |
| (b) Alliteration | (d) Euphemism | (c) |

4. Necessity is the mother of invention.

- |                     |                    |     |
|---------------------|--------------------|-----|
| (a) Personification | (c) Litotes thesis |     |
| (b) Irony           | (d) Paradox        | (a) |

5. I saw a saw that could not saw.

- |            |              |     |
|------------|--------------|-----|
| (a) Bathos | (c) Metonymy |     |
| (b) Pun    | (d) Zeugma   | (b) |

II Identify the following Figures of Speech:

1. It is a century since we met.

- |                 |               |     |
|-----------------|---------------|-----|
| (a) Anti-thesis | (c) Simile    |     |
| (b) Litotes     | (d) Hyperbole | (d) |

2. One Nuclear bomb can ruin your whole day.

- |              |                |     |
|--------------|----------------|-----|
| (a) Litotes  | (c) Pun        |     |
| (b) Metaphor | (d) Apostrophe | (a) |

3. The bees began to buzz.

- |              |                  |     |
|--------------|------------------|-----|
| (a) Oxymoron | (c) Paradox      |     |
| (b) Epigram  | (d) Onomatopoeia | (d) |

4. Doctor on Wheels.

- |                     |                 |     |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----|
| (a) Simile          | (c) Zeugma      |     |
| (b) Personification | (d) Synecdoche. | (d) |

5. He killed ten lions, five deers and one mosquito.

- |                |              |     |
|----------------|--------------|-----|
| (a) Synecdoche | (c) Metonymy |     |
| (b) Bathos     | (d) Paradox  | (b) |

State True or false:

1. Living hate = Oxymoron

√

(True/ false)

- √
2. The trees are dancing = Apostrophe (True/ false) √
3. Bitter Sweet = Oxymoron (True/ false) √
4. Gandhiji, you must come and save our country: Personification (True/ false) √
5. 'Pun' is play on words (True/ false) √
6. 'Hyperbole' is exaggeration (True/ false) √
7. 'Epigram' is understatement (True/ false) √
8. 'Metaphor' is condensed simile (True/ false) √
9. 'Litotes' is a form of understatement (True/ false) √
10. 'Metonymy' means 'a change of name' (True/ false)

#### 4.20.6. Sample Questions:

- I Define and illustrate any four of the following: 4 x 5 = 20
- a) Simile
  - b) Apostrophe
  - c) Pun
  - d) Paradox
  - e) Onomatopoeia
  - f) Epigram
  - g) Personification
  - h) Oxymoron
- II Define and illustrate any four of the following: 4 x 5 = 20
- a) Metaphor
  - b) Alliteration
  - c) Antithesis
  - d) Synecdoche
  - e) Irony

- f) Climax
- g) Zeugma
- h) Hyperbole

#### **4.20.7 Reference Books**

1. M.H. Abrams. A Glossary of Literary Terms.
2. I.A. Richards. Principles of Literary Criticism.
3. Indigo Dictionary of Literary Terms.

**K. Elim Jeevana Jyothi**