Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon
Open University

Master of Arts

MAEN-114(N)

MAJOR TRENDS AND MOVEMENTS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE-II

Contents

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Introduction to Block I

This block focuses on the study of the Romantic period of the English Literature. Learners will study the literary background of this period, as well as the impact of the period in the field of literature. In English literature the period of 1798-1832 is known as the Romantic Age. The age begins in 1798, the year Wordsworth and Coleridge published their *Lyrical Ballads*, and ends in 1832, a year which saw the death of Sir Walter Scott and the enactment of the First Reform Bill by the parliament. These years link literary and political events. The Romantic period was an era in which a literary revolution (Revival of Romanticism) took place alongside the social and economic revolutions. This is why in some histories of literature the Romantic period is called the 'Age of Revolutions'. The present block is divided into the following four units:

Unit – 1 is devoted to the study of the Romanticism. It focuses on the origin and development of the period and further goes to describe its socio-political and cultural context. Romanticism was an artistic, literary, musical, and intellectual movement that originated in Europe towards the end of the 18th century, and in most areas was at its peak in the approximate period from 1800 to 1850.

Unit – 2 deals with the poets and poetry of the Romantic age. The Romantic writers based their theories on the intuition and the wisdom of the heart. On the other hand, they were violently stirred by the suffering of which they were the daily witnesses. They hoped to find a way of changing the social order by their writing, they believed in literature being a sort of mission to be carried out in order to reach the wisdom of the Universe.

Unit – 3 focuses on the novelists and novels of the Romantic period. It also discusses the progress of the novel during the Romantic Age. Several writers were writing novels which as a literary genre existed much before but romantic novelists embellished it with new subject matters and new ideas. The Romantic Age in English literature was essentially an age of poetry but the temperament of time was also suitable for the growth of the novels. The novelists of the Romantic age exhibited same tendencies in their works which were evident in the poetry of the age. Romantic Age Novelists and their Novels are characterised by escapist urge of realism, imagination and glorification of nature. Austen, Edgeworth & Scott were the leading face of the fictional prose work and *Pride and Prejudice, Sense and Sensibility*, Talisman, The *Absentee* were popular novels of the time.

Unit – 4 focuses on important literary trends and texts of the Romantic Period. Romanticism proper was preceded by several related developments from the mid-18th century on that can be termed Pre-Romanticism. Among such trends was a new appreciation of the medieval romance, from which the Romantic Movement derives its name. Literary output was diverse and immense. If there was the dominance of poetry there were also other forms of literature such as prose, novel, drama etc.

UNIT-1: ROMANTICISM – ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE LITERARY MOVEMENT, SOCIO-POLITICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Structure

1.0 OBJECTIVES

After completing this unit the learners will be able to:

- Understand the term “Romanticism”.
- Analyse, identify and appreciate Romantic literature.
- Relate the historical and intellectual background of the Romantic age.

- Understand the social, political and cultural impact of Romanticism.
- Describe the salient features of Romanticism

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to Romanticism as a literary movement in England. It deals with the political, social, literary and other factors which brought about this movement. It considers various definitions of the term "Romanticism" and it devotes a good part to discussion of the salient features of romanticism. Romanticism was an artistic, literary, musical and intellectual movement that originated in Europe towards the end of 18th century. It was one of the dominant movement in literature particularly in music and painting. Although many dates are given for the rise of the romantic age, the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* by William Wordsworth and S.T. Coleridge in 1798 is mostly marked as the beginning of the romantic era and the period ends with the accession of Queen Victoria in 1837. In its most coherent early form, as it emerged in the 1790's in Germany and Britain, Romanticism is generally treated under the head 'The Romantic Movement' or 'Romantic Revival'. The main focus was mainly on freedom of individual self-expression. The ordered rationality of the preceding age (The Augustan Period) was viewed as mechanical, impersonal and artificial. The new preoccupations came to be sincerity, spontaneity and originality. These replaced the decorous imitation of classical models upon which neo-classicists like Dryden, Pope and Johnson placed much value.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT

1.2.1 Origin

The term "Romantic" is derived from the old French 'Romans' and is denoted as a vernacular language derived from the Latin word that provides us the expression the "Romance languages", but it came to mean more than a language. It not only meant an imaginative story and a courtly romance but also implies the quality and preoccupations of literature written in the "Romance languages", especially romances and stories. However, day by day, it came to mean so many other things also. By the seventeenth century in English, the French word "romantic" had come to mean anything which is from imaginative or fictitious, fabulous or extravagant, fanciful or bizarre, exaggerated and fanciful. The adjective "roman-tic" was also used with the connotation of disapproval. In the eighteenth century, it was increasingly used with various connotations of approval, especially in the descriptions of pleasing qualities in the landscape. To elaborate on the poetry of the Romantic period (about 1780-1830) the term "romantic" has all these and other meanings and connotations behind it, which reflects the complexity and multiplicity of the European Romanticism. The term Romanticism has not been directly shared from the concept of love but rather derived from the French word 'romaunt' (a romantic story told in verse). Romanticism, that is focused on emotions and the inner feelings of the writer, and is often used as an autobiographical asset to inform about the work or even to provide a template for it, which is not like the traditional literature at the time.

In the words of M.H. Abrams, "The Romantic Period is usually taken to extend approximately from the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 – or alternatively, from the publication of Lyrical Ballads in 1798 – through the first three decades of the nineteenth century." In English literature the period of 1798 -1832 is known as the Romantic Age.

1.2.2 Historical Perspective

The age begins in 1798, the year William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge published their *Lyrical Ballads,* and ends in 1832, a year which saw the death of Sir Walter Scott and the enactment of the First Reform Bill by the parliament. So Louis Cazamian calls the age of

Wordsworth "The Romantic Period" (1782-1832) and he calls the dominant literary movement of the period "English Romanticism". These years link literary and political events. The history of England between the period 1780 to 1830 covers a period which begins in the latter half of the reign of George III and ends just seven years before the accession of Victoria in 1837. Politically, it was an active period which saw the outbreak of the Colonists' rebellion in North America, and the French Revolution in 1789. The colonists successfully defended their country and achieved independence. A far reaching impact on society was exerted by the outbreak of the French Revolution which aimed at ushering in an era of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. In the beginning young England, led by Pitt the younger, hailed the new French Republic and offered it friendship. It is only when the Reign of Terror was established in France in 1793 that England opposed the French and this struggle continued till the final defeat of Napoleon in 1815. "Hostilities dragged on till 1815, in the end bringing about the extinction of the French Republic, the birth of which was greeted so joyfully by the English Liberals, the rise and destruction of the power of Napoleon, and the restoration of the Bourdon dynasty. These events had their effects in every corner of Europe, and in none more strongly than in England." The movement for discussion here had already set in much before William Wordsworth took his pen to compose poems. The early Romantic poets like James Thomson (1700-48), Oliver Goldsmith (1728-74),Thomas Chatterton (1752-70),Thomas Gray (1716-71),William Collins (1721-1759), William Cowper (1731- 1800), George Crabbe (1754-1832), Robert Burns (1759-1795), and William Blake (1757-1827) deviated from the neo-classic insistence on rules. Wordsworth is perhaps the only romantic poet who made his poetic experiences the locus of his critical discourse. Unlike Coleridge, he was not a theorist. Instead he unrivaled before us the workings of the mind of the poet, and therefore, Wordsworth's literary criticism ceases to be criticism in its most literal sense. It comes out as the matrix where the poet's mind generates emotions and feelings with that much of intensity and passion required for transmitting them into poetic experience which forms the basis of poetic composition. From this perspective, Wordsworth's Preface to the second edition of Lyrical Ballads in 1800 can be seen as a poetic "manifesto," or "statement of revolutionary aims."

1.2.3 Freedom of the Colonies and the French Revolution

The Romantic period was an era in which a literary revolution (Revival of Romanticism) took place alongside the social and economic revolutions. This is why in some histories of literature the Romantic period is called the 'Age of Revolutions'. The American Declaration of Independence from British Rule of 1776 marked the loss of the American colonies as a consequence of the American War of Independence (1775-1783). The French Revolution in 1789 not only abolished monarchy in France, it also paved the way for abolishing the whole aristocratic system in the Europe. It attempted to reconstruct the whole social system on the basis of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. Britain's conservative rulers feared the revolutionary spirit and were well determined to prevent these forces from spreading to British society. It had a deep impact on all thinkers and literary writers, including Wordsworth. The French Revolution was a revolt against the monarchist dictatorship's unfair laws and unequal distribution of resources. It was also a battle to achieve equality and remove oppression. People were angered by increasing taxation, oppressive feudal system, crop failures and economic crisis. All these socio-political factors led to the outbreak of French revolution. The French revolution was began in 1789 and the effect of it did not confine itself only to France, but also spread to England. It has crucial influence on British, intellectual, philosophical and political life in the 19th century. The writers of the period were also inspired by the ideas of French Revolution. They were also focused on different aspects of Romanticism. Although Romanticism had influenced the writing style of authors, not all writers of this period worked in this style. Louis Cazamian remarks that the Romantic period (1798-1832) consisted of two phases. During the first phase, poetry became a vessel of emotion and imaginative vision. Its chief exponents were Wordsworth, Coleridge, Scott, and Southey. In the second phase, the early romantics began to imbue their poems with mysticism. But the second generation of

the Romantics, its chief poets were Byron, Shelley, and Keats, was born with a deep love for nostalgic strangeness. So they dived into the past, particularly into the Middle Ages and the ages of classical literature of Greece and Rome. Then they attempted to pack their poetry with a feeling of nostalgic, strangeness. Gradually the romantic literature tended to be mystical, sensuous or wonderful. Byron, Shelley, and Keats had a passion for freedom, love, and beauty respectively. As stated by Douglas Bush, the Romantic Movement brought about the following changes in literature:

"The turning from reason to the senses, feelings, imagination and intuition; from the civilised, modern, and sophisticated to the primitive, medieval and natural; from urban society to rural solitude; from preoccupation with human nature to preoccupation with aesthetic and spiritual values of external nature; from mundane actually to visions of the mysterious, the ideal, and the infinite; from satire to myth; from the expression of accepted moral truth to discovery of the beauty that is truth; from realistic recognition of things as they are to faith in progress; from belief in God and evil to belief in man and goodness; from established religious and philosophical creeds to individual speculations and revelations, from impersonal objectivity to subjectivism; from correctness to individual expressiveness."

1.2.4 The Industrial Revolution

Another revolution that changed the face of the society for ever was Industrial Revolution. The Industrial Revolution completely transformed Britain's social structure. The invention of the steam-engine by James Watt in 1765 and the subsequent inventions of new machines for weaving, spinning and the like brought about a change in the industry, but it also changed the society. The factory system replaced the cottage industry and threw many people out of employment. This on the one hand led to the accumulation of wealth in the hands of manufacturers; on the other, it brought sufferings and hardships to working class. The growth in industry created a new middle class which demanded its share in power. This paved the way for expanding democracy in England. The First Reform Bill of 1832 was enacted to give power of vote to a larger section of society, which was concentrated in the hands of a few only so far. The development in industry also caused the migration of rural population from villages and towns to large cities. As a result the social and family life of people was changing rapidly. There is no denying the fact that the Industrial Revolution began in England sometime after the middle of the 18th century. England was the "First Industrial Nation." As one economic historian commented in the 1960s, it was England which first executed "the takeoff into self-sustained growth." And by 1850, England had become an economic titan. Its goal was to supply two-thirds of the globe with cotton spun, dyed, and woven in the industrial centres of northern England. England proudly proclaimed itself to be the "Workshop of the World," a position that country held until the end of the 19th century when Germany, Japan and United States overtook it. The Industrial Revolution brought about vast changes in English society. It helped to create both great fortunes and great hardship. Within a short time England went from being a country of small villages with independent craftsmen to a country of huge factories run by sweat shops full of men, women, and children who lived in overcrowded and dangerous city slums. An industrial England was being born in pain and suffering. The presence of a developing democracy, the ugliness of the sudden growth of cities, the prevalence of human pain, the obvious presence of the "profit motive" all helped to characterize what was in many respects "the best of times..... the worst of times."

1.2.5 Growth of Science

Another development that changed the life in the nineteenth century was the growth in science. Technological and scientific research was moving rapidly and the publication of *Origin of Species* in 1858 was the culmination of scientific research that propounded the theory of evolution. This challenged the traditional religious foundations of human society. The Elizabethan age is marked by the highest achievements in literary creations that give free expression to the romantic spirit of

individual imagination. But in the 18th century giving expression to individual emotions was considered as vulgar and disgusting. Rationalism, intellectuality and restrain replaced the free, romantic, individual imagination. The readers of the 18th century could not enjoy the boundless landscapes of imagination that stirred their emotions and feelings in the Elizabethan times. They were seldom exposed to the impassioned emotions in literature or to the thrills of colourful adventures. In a letter dated 1800, the great Romantic poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote, "I shall attack Chemistry, like a Shark." John Keats' famous 1816 sonnet "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" celebrated the recent discovery of Uranus — the first new planet to be found in more than a thousand years. In fact, says author Richard Holmes, the scientific discoveries of the Romantic age inspired generations of great artists and their work.

1.2.6 A Reaction against the Age of Enlightment and the Neo-Classicism

The concept of Romanticism was preceded by the philosophy of Neoclassicism. In the writings before this period humans were viewed as being limited and imperfect. A sense of reverence for order, reason, and rules were focused upon. There was distrust for innovation and invention. Society was encouraged to view itself as a group with generic characteristics. The idea of individualism was looked upon with disfavour. People were encouraged through literature, art, religion, and politics to follow the traditional rules of the church and government. However, by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a great reaction against this philosophy was noted. It was labeled as Romanticism. The Neo-classical age was dominated by common sense, moderation, and thoughtful expression of the social life of the age. In these conditions, the time was ripe for revolution in literature as well. In the second half of the 18th century the writers began to breaks the restrictions of the Neo-classical age, and began to seek wholeheartedly a new freedom of expression. The spirit of romanticism, the fancy and imagination, the savage enthusiasm of rural life, all were getting preference over the dry intellectualism of the 18th century. The Romantic Movement, which Victor Hugo calls 'liberalism in literature', is simply the expression of life as seen by imagination, rather than by prosaic 'common sense', which was the central doctrine of life in the 18th century. Romanticism (also the Romantic era or the Romantic period) was an artistic, literary, and intellectual movement that originated in Europe toward the end of the 18th century and in most areas was at its peak in the approximate period from 1800 to 1850. Partly a reaction to the Industrial Revolution, it was also a revolt against the aristocratic social and political norms of the Age of Enlightenment and a reaction against the scientific rationalisation of nature. It was embodied most strongly in the visual arts, music, and literature, but had a major impact on historiography, education and the natural sciences. Its effect on politics was considerable and complex; while for much of the peak Romantic period it was associated with liberalism and radicalism, its long-term effect on the growth of nationalism was probably more significant. Romanticism appeared in conflict with the Enlightenment. Romanticism reflected a crisis in Enlightenment thought itself, a crisis which shook the comfortable 18th century philosophers out of their intellectual single-mindedness. The Romantics were conscious of their unique destiny. In fact, it was self-consciousness which appears as one of the keys elements of Romanticism itself. The philosophers were too objective – they chose to see human nature as something uniform. The philosophers had also attacked the Church because it blocked human reason. The Romantics attacked the Enlightenment because it blocked the free play of the emotions and creativity. The philosophers had turned man into a soulless, thinking machine – a robot. In a comment typical of the Romantic thrust, William Hazlitt (1778-1830) asked, "For the better part of my life all I did was think." And William Godwin (1756-1836), a contemporary of Hazlitt's asked, "What shall I do when I have read all the books?" Christianity had formed a matrix into which medieval man situated himself. The Enlightenment replaced the Christian matrix with the mechanical matrix of Newtonian natural philosophy. For the Romantic, the result was nothing less than the demotion of the individual. Imagination, sensitivity, feelings, spontaneity and freedom were stifled – choked to death. Man must

liberate himself from these intellectual chains. Like one of their intellectual fathers, Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), the Romantics yearned to reclaim human freedom. Habits, values, rules and standards imposed by a civilization grounded in reason and reason only had to be abandoned. "Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains," Rousseau had written. Whereas the philosophers saw man in common that is, as creatures endowed with Reason the Romantics saw diversity and uniqueness. That is, those traits which set one man apart from another, and traits which set one nation apart from another. Discover yourself - express yourself, cried the Romantic artist. Play your own music, write your own drama, paint your own personal vision, live, love and suffer in your own way. So instead of the motto, "Sapere aude," "Dare to know!" the Romantics took up the battle cry, "Dare to be!" The Romantics were rebels and they knew it. They dared to march to the tune of a different drummer – their own. The Romantics were passionate about their subjectivism, about their tendency toward introspection.

1.2.7 Social Life

The social developments in the last decades of the eighteenth century decisively ensured the emergence of Britain as the first nation-state of a new type that form industrial capitalistic democracy which reached maturity about the end of the nineteenth century. The transition from our older economy of agriculture and domestic handicrafts was quite spontaneous, not directed from above or regulated in any way except the laws inherent in the new system of production. In no long time, the cumulative effect of the introduction of mechanical improvements provoked an upheaval affecting the community at all levels. From the eighties onwards, the scale and tempo of change were visibly increasing, and in a single generation the mode and manner of living which had fostered the brief splendour of a native classicism had become incompatible with social reality.

Dress

Gentlemen wore their own hair instead of wigs. Ladies' dresses were allowed to outline the body. The use of cosmetics was much reduced in fashionable circles. The simple elegance of domestic architecture and furniture provided the appropriate setting.

Opening of New Worlds

It was an age of adventure and the discovery of new worlds was no less astonishing than the discoveries in the Elizabethan period. Captain James Cook's three voyages were the most impressive. In the second of them he discovered Australia and the Sandwich Islands and crossed the Antarctic Circle.

Roads and Canals

Roads were notoriously bad and navigable water-ways were not yet developed. Even then a few improvements were made. The opening up the Midlands by canals was the achievement of a great constructional engineer, James Brindley. Improvements were effected on the traffic arteries and by the 1820s the most rapid coaches could complete the journey from London to Liverpool, Leeds, or Manchester in about twenty-four hours. The improvements in roads, canals and industry led to the development of existing towns. Between1800 to1830 many of these towns doubled their population but the growth in population became the cause of over-crowding, insanitary squalor and grimy ugliness.

Love for Theatre

"Theatre-going was the greatest delight to towns-people, and full-blooded entertainment was provided, by the audience as well as by the players. It was an age of great or very talented performers, whose interpretations preserved the continuity of the drama at a time when contemporary dramatists were few and second-rate." No great plays were produced during this period. Though the age was

barren in dramatic production, yet Leigh Hunt and Hazlitt originated modern dramatic criticism and Coleridge illumined Shakespeare with flashes of profound insight.

An Era of Inventions

A number of inventions were made during this period and small technical improvements had been made in most industries throughout the nineteenth century. Improvements were made in mining, metal working and textile industry. Sir Humphry Davy invented the famous safety lamp for the miners. George Stephenson's lamp also saved thousands of lives in mines. In 1784 Cort invented a new method of making better quality iron. Cort's method also increased the production of iron. James Watt improved steam engine. In the textile industry James Hargreaves invented the Spinning jenny. Hardly had Hargreaves Spinning jenny been completed when Richard Arkwright invented another machine for the purpose. In 1770 Samuel improved Hargreaves Jenny and constructed a machine which came to be called a mule. This was made self-acting by Roberts in 1830.

1.3 DEFINITIONS OF ROMANTICISM

Attempts at a single definition of Romanticism fall far short of matching the variegated facts of a time which exceeds almost all other ages of English literature in the range and diversity of its achievements. Romanticism is a difficult term to define as it stands for several things together. For instance, it has been associated with the word 'romance' of the mediaeval period which had a certain feeling of remoteness and a faraway atmosphere particularly regarding the landscape, fields of tearing and bravery, chivalry; belief in supernatural, chance and magic; women worship etc. In the late 17th and 18th centuries, the term connoted "wild, extravagant and improbable". The diarists Evelyn and Pepys used it in the sense of Gothic, that is, "irregular, wild and fantastic". It is strange that the poets now known as 'Romantic poets', such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats did not call themselves 'Romantic'. This term was attached to them later in the 19th century. Wordsworth had considered 'romantic' as something "extravagant, excessive, and even undesirable".

Walter Pater, an essayist and a literary critic, defines romanticism as "addition of strangeness to beauty". To T. S. Eliot, the term 'romantic' signified 'the individual' and even 'revolutionary'.

W. J. Long defines Romantic poetry in the following words: "the protest against the bondage of rules, the return to nature and the human heart, the interest in old sagas and mediaeval romances as suggestive of a heroic age, the sympathy with the toilers of the world, the emphasis upon individual genius, and the return to Milton and the Elizabethans, instead of to Pope and Dryden for literary models."

In the words of Abercrombie, "Romanticism is a withdrawal from outer experience to concentrate on inner experience." To some others, it is the "Renaissance of Wonder". Romanticism has also been defined as 'liberalism in literature' because it sought freedom from old conventions of poetry. Other scholars, such as Grierson, Irving Babbitt, Herford, Watts-Dunton, C. M. Bowra and Dr. Stendhal, etc. have also written elaborately on Romanticism. According to F. L. Lucas, Romanticism resulted from a dominance of impulses from the Id (the primitive impulse commerce classes and from our impulse), classicism from our impulse of Superego (the impulse which says it is pleasant but wrong), and realism from the impulse of Ego (it looks pleasant but it is a snare and delusion). Legouis Cazamian defines Romantic spirit in the following words:

> "The Romantic spirit can be defined as accentuated predominance of emotional life, provoked or directed by the exercise of imaginative vision, and in its turn stimulation or directing such exercise. Intense emotion coupled with an intense display of imagery, such is the frame of mind which supports and feeds the new literature. The works of art which give the epoch its distinct character spring from a creative effort which has been promoted through

the exaltation of those two groups of tendencies."

The German poet Friedrich Schlegel, who is given credit for first using the term *romantic* to describe literature, defined it as "literature depicting emotional matter in an imaginative form." The American Scholar A.O. Lovejoy once observed that the word 'romantic' has come to mean so many things that, by itself, it means nothing at all...The variety of its actual and possible meanings and connotations reflect the complexity and multiplicity of European romanticism. In *The Decline and Fall of the Romantic Ideal* (1948) F.L. Lucas counted 11,396 definitions of 'romanticism'. In *Classic, Romantic and Modern* (1961) Barzun cites examples of synonymous usage for romantic which show that it is perhaps the most remarkable example of a term which can mean many things according to personal and individual needs. An earlier definition comes from Charles Baudelaire: "Romanticism is precisely situated neither in choice of subject nor exact truth, but in the way of feeling." According to Isaiah Berlin, Romanticism embodied "a longing for the unbounded and the indefinable, for perpetual movement and change, an effort to return to the forgotten sources of life, a passionate effort at self-assertion both individual and collective, a search after means of expressing an unappeasable yearning for unattainable goals". Isaiah Berlin sees Romanticism as disrupting the ideas of moral absolutes and agreed values and replaced by a passionate belief in spiritual freedom, individual creativity. Defining romanticism Rene Wellek sys that "it is a compound of a particular view of imagination, a particular attitude to nature and a particular style of writing".

1.4 POETIC THEORY AND POETIC PRACTICE

Wordsworth undertook to justify the new poetry by a critical manifesto or statement of poetic principles, in the form of an extended Preface to the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1800, which he enlarged still further in the third edition of 1802. In it he set himself in opposition to the literary ancient regime, those writers of the preceding century who, in his view, had imposed on poetry artificial conventions that distorted its free and natural development. Many of Wordsworth's later critical writings were attempts to clarify, buttress, or qualify points made in his first declaration. Coleridge declared that the Preface was "half a child of my own brain"; and although he soon developed doubts about some of Wordsworth's unguarded statements, and undertook to correct them in *Biographia Literaria* (1817), he did not question the necessity of Wordsworth's attempt to overturn the reigning tradition. In the course of the eighteenth century there had been increasing opposition to the tradition of Dryden, Pope, and Johnson, and especially in the 1740s and later, there had emerged many of the critical concepts, as well as a number of the poetic subjects and forms, that were later exploited by Wordsworth and his contemporaries. Wordsworth's *Preface* nevertheless deserves its reputation as a turning point in English literature, for Wordsworth gathered up isolated ideas, organized them into a coherent theory based on explicit critical principals, and made them the rationale for his own massive achievements as a poet. We can conveniently use the concepts in this extremely influential essay as points of departure for a survey of distinctive elements in the theory and poetry of the Romantic period.

1.5 KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF ROMANTICISM

Romanticism which was popular in the late 18th and early 19th centuries was a literary movement that emphasised nature and the importance of emotion and artistic freedom. Renaissance, the supreme Romantic Movement in English literature had brought about a transformation not only in England but also in European life. Writers of this era were rebelling against the attempt to explain the world and human nature through science and the lens of industrial revolution. There are certain characteristic features and style that make a piece of writing a part of the Romantic Movement. Some of its major characteristics are as follows:

1.5.1 The Return to Nature

The Romantics greatly emphasised the importance of nature and the primal feelings of awe, apprehension and horror felt by man on approaching the sublimeness of it. This was mainly because of the industrial revolution, which had shifted life from the peaceful, serene countryside towards the chaotic cities, transforming man's natural order. Nature was not only appreciated for its visual beauty, but also revered for its ability to help the urban man find his true identity. "Nature" meant many things to the Romantics. As suggested above, it was often presented as itself a work of art, constructed by a divine imagination, in emblematic language. For example, throughout "Song of Myself," Whitman makes a practice of presenting commonplace items in nature – "ants," "heap'd stones," and "pokeweed" – as containing divine elements, and he refers to the "grass" as a natural "hieroglyphic," "the handkerchief of the Lord." While particular perspectives with regard to nature varied considerably – nature as a healing power, nature as a source of subject and image, nature as a refuge from the artificial constructs of civilisation, including artificial language – the prevailing views accorded nature the status of an organically unified whole. It was viewed as "organic," rather than, as in the scientific or rationalist view, as a system of 'mechanical" laws, for Romanticism displaced the rationalist view of the universe as a machine (e.g., the deistic image of a clock) with the analogue of an "organic" image, a living tree or mankind itself.

For the Romantics, Nature was transfigured into a living force and held together as a unity by the breath of the divine spirit. It was infused with a comprehensive symbolism resting on its profound moral and emotional connection with human subjectivity. Coleridge referred to nature as the "language of God." "My Heart Leaps Up" a lyrical poem written by William Wordsworth in 1802, is a poem that also conveys innocence and oneness with nature. The speaker in this poem undergoes extreme awe and joy when he sees a rainbow in the sky. Wordsworth has personified the Nature. He considered Nature as a living personality. He believed that there is a divine spirit in all the objects of Nature and so they have healing power. This philosophy of Nature has been well expressed in his famous poems like "Tintern Abbey" and in *Book II of The Prelude*. Wordsworth believed that the company of Nature gives us joy. Since Nature has healing divine power, it relieves the sorrow- stricken hearts. According to Wordsworth, a person who grows up in the lap of Nature is a perfect man in every respect. Wordsworth believed in the education of Nature. He believed that a man can learn a lot of things about moral evil and good from Nature. For him Nature is the best teacher and guide.

Romantic writers give personal and deep descriptions of nature and its wild and powerful qualities. Poets like John Keats in his poems such as "To Autumn" celebrates Autumn by symbolizing the beauty in ephemeral by realizing that his life and career is very short he was dying of consumption.

Where are the songs of spring? Ay, Where are they?

Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—

While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,

And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;

1.5.2 Theme of Aesthetic Beauty

Aestheticism or pursuit of beauty and elevation of taste was an important part of romantic literature. Romantic writers explores the theme of aesthetic beauty, not just of nature but as an intertwinement and juxtaposition of the ephemeral and eternal. They gives descriptions about female beauty and praised woman of the romantic era for their loveliness rather than artificial or constrained. Byron's "She Walks in Beauty" is an example for this:

She walks in beauty, like the night

Of cloudless climes and starry skies;

And all that's best of dark and bright

Meet in her aspect and her eyes;

Thus mellowed to that tender light

Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

1.5.3 Creed of Imagination

The imagination was elevated to a position as the supreme faculty of the mind. This contrasted distinctly with the traditional arguments for the supremacy of reason. The Romantics tended to define and to present the imagination as our ultimate "shaping" or creative power, the approximate human equivalent of the creative powers of nature or even deity. It is dynamic, an active, rather than passive power, with many functions. Imagination is the primary faculty for creating all art. On a broader scale, it is also the faculty that helps humans to constitute reality. When previous generation focused on reason, writers of the Romantic Movement explored the significance of imagination and the creative impulse. They employed the power of imagination and the creativity, as well as the artistic viewpoint. They knew that artists and writers can look at the world differently. Thus they celebrated that vision in their work. Wordsworth by observing the power of imaginations defines imagination as "The mean of deep insight and sympathy, the power to conceive and express images removed from normal objective reality". Romantic authors and poets offered mental images to the readers that are not literary existed. So many images such as cloud at the sunset, blue and black sky, shining stars, tall-green mountain, the river banks at the sunset, elliptical galaxy, and many other imaginary visuals filled the mind of readers. When Shelly treated poetry as the expression of imagination, Keats supposed that only in the imagination the ultimate reality is to be found. He wrote, "I am certain of nothing but of the holiness of the Heart's affections and the truth of Imagination. What the imagination seizes as beauty must be truth." It is Keats's plight of imagination that helps him leave the natural world and transport himself into the world of nightingale. Look at the following example from his "Ode to a Nightingale":

Already with thee! tender is the night,

And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,

Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;

But here there is no light,

Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown

Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

1.5.4 Theme of Solitude

Romantic writers believed that creative inspiration comes from solitary exploration. They exulted the feeling of being alone and found loneliness is much needed to think and create. "The Solitary Reaper", "Tintern Abbey", "The Immortality Ode", and "To the Cuckoo", all seem to have been composed upon the emotions recollected in tranquility. In his "Tintern Abbey" Wordsworth's visit is reflected through powerful lines:

These beauteous forms,

Through a long absence, have not been to me

As is a landscape to a blind man's eye;

Romantic poets believed that one gets peace and tranquility by being alone. Wordsworth, Mary Shelly, and William Blake and many other writers went through this experience of being alone and

this could create them most celebrated works. The poem "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud", opens with the speaker recalling a particular experience where he was alone. Likewise he feels utmost happy when he see the bliss of solitude". When solitude is represented as a ground for the heightened state of being the poet enjoys. Solitary figure became prominent important in Romantic prose and poetry as the masses could relate to the solitary figure as it was unanimous unlike the poet. Solitary figure Wordsworth created for "Tintern Abbey", Solitary characters in Mary Shelly's "Frankenstein" are examples for this.

1.5.5 Use of Personification

Romantic era poets loved the use of personification to call their readers to attention and make them return to nature. Most of the romantic writers used this technique for giving immanent objects human characters to allow the readers to better identify with what is portrayed on the stage. We can see personification of everything from birds and animals to natural events or aspects. In many poems such as "Ozymandias", "Ode to the Westwind", and "To Skylark", poet use personification to show the like between nature and the individual spirit. The most important example of personification within 'Daffodils' is "tossing their heads in sprightly dance". This is significant due to the word "sprightly". "Sprightly" is an adjective meaning to be full of spirit and vitality.

Another example is from "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey":

And I have felt

A presence that disturbs me with the joy

Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime

Of something far more deeply interfused,

Here, Wordsworth personifies the presence and suggests that it can disturb and bring joy. The presence becomes an active force that affects the speaker's emotions and thoughts

1.5.6 Creed of Emotions

Romantics generally called for greater attention to the emotions as a necessary supplement to purely logical reason. When this emphasis was applied to the creation of poetry, a very important shift of focus occurred. Wordsworth's definition of all good poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" marks a turning point in literary history. Most of the Romantic writers used emotion over reason in daily life. Emotion played a crucial role in nearly all writings from the Romantic period. While reading works written in this period one can see feelings described in all forms. The earlier writers of the Enlightenment believed that all knowledge was attainable through human reason. Many attitude characteristic of the Romantic era were directly opposite to the Enlightenment period. They believed that using emotions over reason was the more righteous choice. Therefore they presented their emotions such as fear, love, sorrow, loneliness through their writings. This focus on emotion dissented the notions of rationality and made romantic poetry extremely readable and relatable. "The Last Duchess" and "Ulysses" are best examples for this purpose as the characters in these poems are employing their emotions to dictate important situations and emotions.

1.5.7 Use of Spiritual and Supernatural Elements

Romanticism strictly rejected rationalism as a constraint for creativity and imagination. They did not turn away from the darker side of emotion and the mysteries of the supernatural. Moreover they considered an artistic skill as God gifted faculty. Thus writer, painter, sculpture were free to construct their own world by mean of their own imaginations. Many of the writings has Gothic motifs and supernatural elements which served as symbols for emotions of guilt, depression and other darker feelings. For instance Keats' "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" narrates about a supernatural women with

whom a knight falls in love. In the same way in Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", spirits both heavenly and malevolent interfering in the natural world. Supernaturalism is another essential aspect of romantic poetry, and it is yet another unique trait employed by romantic poets. Supernaturalism was used not just to create horror and awe but also for the reader's pleasure. Coleridge is the leading romantic poet in this regard. His poem "Kubla Khan" is the most romantic in the history of English literature and is completely the product of his imagination. The whole poem is a collection of supernatural elements. Just have a look at the following example:

"And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His fleshing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice and
Close eyes with holy dread for him on
Honey – drew hath fed and drunk the
Milk of paradise."

1.5.8 Creed of Self Expression

English Romanticism was a creed of the expression of "self". Classicism preached that personal aspects of the mind should not be expressed. But romantic artists put the 'self' in the centre of their art. In other words, they represented their personal experience, view, idea, etc. in their artistic creations. Here the self of the writer stands invisible in the centre and describes its experience, reaction, invention, etc. That is why, such pronouns as I, my, me, we, us, are present in most literary creations up to 1850.

Romantic poetry is the poetry of the miseries, despairs, and personal stories of the poets; it is the poetry of sentiments, emotions and imagination of the poets. Romantic poetry is against the objectivity of neoclassical poetry, whose authors avoided describing emotions in their work. They wanted to present a true picture of society, while the romantic poets avoided descriptions of their contemporary age. Keats is the leading poet in this regard, and his work is like a biography. He wrote poetry just for the sake of writing poetry, not wanting to convey any moral message to his readers. Instead, he wanted to create and prove himself to be the best poet of his age. Throughout his work, one can find numerous clues to his personal life. Look at the following example from "Ode to a Nightingale":

"or many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain."

1.5.9 Medievalism

Medievalism is yet another essential characteristic of romantic poetry. Medievalism indicates a love for the Middle Ages (from around the fall of Rome in 476 CE and the Renaissance in the 14th century), and romantic poetry is replete with elements of this era. Keats and Coleridge are the leading romantic poets whose poetry exhibited an ample amount of medievalism. Romantic poets were against

intellectualism, urbanism, industrialisation and the humdrum of life. They wanted to get rid of these aspects of society by taking asylum in the far-off lands of their imagination. The Middle Ages greatly appealed to their taste; they adored weird, remote and recondite places and found that during the era more than in their own age. Look at the following example:

"O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,

Alone and palely loitering?

The sedge has withered from the lake,

And no birds sing."

1.6 LET'S SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed the Romanticism as a literary movement and the factors responsible for its emergence. Romantic Movement came to the fore at the end of the 18th century as a powerful blow to the Neo-Classicism and Industrial Revolution. People from every corner of society began to see nature as primary source of knowledge and existence. We have also shared some common traits of Romanticism with additional information to Neo-Classicism, Industrial Revolution, French Revolution, growth of science and the Socio-Political condition of the then England. We have also tried to make you understand the Romanticism through various definitions and examples from the different texts of the romantic period. In fact the Romanticism freed human imagination beyond limits and writers of the era tried to seek for a new literary horizon.

1.7 QUESTIONS

1 - Explain the origin of the term 'Romanticism'

2 - Analyse the impact of the French Revolution on Romantic literature.

3 - Compare and contrast between the Neo-classicism and Romanticism.

4 - Describe the socio-political background of Romantic Age.

5 - What are the chief characteristics of English Romanticism?

6 - What was the impact of the Industrial revolution on the British society during Romanticism?

1.8 FURTHER READINGS

1. History of English Literature by Edward Albert.

2. A Short History of English Literature by Ifor Evans.

3. English Literature: Its History and Significance by William J. Long.

4. History of English Literature by Legouis and Cazamian.

5. https://elifnotes.com/romanticism-poetry-poets-characteristics/

6. Critical Approaches to Literature by David Daiches.

7. A Handbook of Literary Terms by M.H. Abrams.

8. Social and Literary History of England by J.N. Mundra & S.C. Mundra.

9. A History of Modern Criticism by Rene Wellek.

UNIT- 2 POETS AND POETRY OF THE PERIOD

Structure

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After completing this unit the learners will be able to:

- Know about two groups of poets
- Poetic craftsmanship of different poets
- Understand the nature of poetry during Romantic Age
- Differentiate between the Neo-Classical poetry and the Romantic poetry.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit bears detailed analysis of the poets and poetry of the Romantic era. The Romantic Movement freed poets from rigid and stubborn rules of the Neo-Classical Age. It provided new sources of creating poetry. Poets shifted towards nature for their creation and inspiration. The new thrust and lift in this era took place due to path breaking poets like: Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley, Byron and many more. The new poetry shook the old shackles of society and made people feel the freedom of their inner self.

2.2 EARLY ROMANTIC POETS

Some of the features of Romanticism were seen much earlier than 1798 in a number of poets. Several writers before Romantic Movement (Age of Transition) had shown a decided shift from the pervading tendencies of Neo-Classical Age in literature. In the second half of the 18th century, a new sensibility in poetry and a new generation of poets was arising. These poets used subjective, autobiographical materials which marked a new trend towards the expression of a lyrical and personal experience of life. They were less intellectual and more emotional presenting a variety of emotional states of the soul. The transitional poetry marks the beginning of a reaction against the rational, intellectual, formal, artificial and unromantic poetry of the age of Pope and Johnson. It was marked by a strong reaction against stereotyped rules. The transitional poets derived inspiration from Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton. Unlike the Augustan poetry, it is poetry of countryside, of common and ordinary people, and not of the fashionable, aristocratic society and town life. Love of nature and human life characterise this poetry. The transitional poets revolted against the conventional poetic style and diction of the Augustan poetry.

2.2.1 James Thomson (1700-1748)

He was the first poet to bring the new note in poetry both in his "Seasons" and "The Castle of Indolence". The Seasons is a blank verse poem and consists of a long series of descriptive passages dealing with natural scenes. Though its style is clumsy, the treatment is refreshing, full of acute observation and acute joy in nature. The Castle of Indolence is written in Spenserian stanza and is remarkable for suggestiveness, dreamy melancholy and harmonious versification. He speaks of the interactions between man and Nature in "The Seasons". The great variety and beauty of nature move him deeply. The following lines remind us of Wordsworth:

Now the soft Hour
Of walking comes for him who lonely loves
To seek the distant Hills, and there converse
With Nature, there to harmonize his Heart,
And in pathetic Song of breathe around
The harmony to Others.

2.2.2 Thomas Gray (1716-71)

He was —a born poet, fell upon an age of prose. His early poems "Hymn to Adversity", "Ode on the Spring" and "On a Distant Prospect of Eton College" strike the note of melancholy that characterises the entire poetry of this period. Nature is described as a suitable background for the play of human emotions. His finest poem "The Elegy Written in A country Churchyard" has many new features in it. It is remarkable for the minute observation in the descriptions of nature, love and sympathy for the humble and the deprived, expression of the primary emotions of human life. His two odes, "The Progress of Poesy" and "The Bard" express the new conception of the poet as an inspired singer. The first shows Milton's influence as regards melody and variety of expression. The Bard is even more romantic and original. It breaks with the classical school and proclaims a literary declaration of independence. His well-known poem, ''Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard'', pays attention to nature and a humble life which are dear to the Romantic poets:

Now folds the glimmering landscape on the sight,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

2.2.3 Mark Akenside (1721-1770)

He began is poetic career with "Epistle to Curio" which is a brilliant satire in the Augustan tradition. He tried to revive the Greek forms of the lyric. His best known poem "The Pleasures of Imagination" is a long poem in Miltonic blank verse. It contains some fine descriptive passages on a nature. The poet sees that the beauty and harmony of nature is shown directly to the purified intellect:

Once more search, undismayed, the dark profound
Where nature works in secret; view the beds
Of min'ral treasure, and th'eternal vault
That bounds the hoary ocean; trace the forms
Of atoms moving with incessant change.
Their elemental round; behold the seeds
Of being, and the energy of life
Kindling the mass with ever-active flame:
Them to the secrets of the working mind Attentive turn;

2.2.4 William Collins (1721-1759)

He wrote his first work *Oriental Eclogues* in prevailing mechanical couplets but it is romantic in spirit and feeling. His "Ode to Evening" is instinct with a sweet tenderness, a subdued pathos, love of nature and a magical enchantment of phrase. His "Ode to Popular Superstitions of the Highlands" introduced a new world of witches, fairies and medieval kings. So it strikes a new and interesting note in romantic revival. His "Ode to Evening" is the forerunner of Keats's "To Autumn". Coleridge is impressed with Collins's use of superstitions and classical legends. Collins's favourite theme of the twilight scene is illustrated in the following lines of Ode to Evening:

Now Air is hush'd, save where the weak-ey'd Bat,
With short shrill Shriek flits by on leathern Wing,
Or where the Beetle winds
His small but sullen Horn,
As of the rises 'midst the twilight Path
Against the Pilgrim born in heedless Hum:

2.2.5 William Cowper (1731-1800)

He is an immediate forerunner of the romantics. His descriptions of homely scenes of woods and brooks, of ploughmen and teamsters and the letter carriers indicate the dawn of a new era in poetry. Cowper was a pioneer who preached the gospel - return to nature. He foreshadowed Wordsworth and Byron. In his love of nature, his emotional response to it and in his sympathetic handling of rural life he certainly anticipates Wordsworth. His minor poems "On the Receipt of My Mother's Picture" and "Alexander Selkirk" show the rise of romanticism in English poetry. Cowper also attacks Alexander Pope for his "smoothness" and advocates the 'manly rough line'. This idea is later developed by Wordsworth. Cowper "anticipated the romantic generation in his political liberalism, in his humanitarianism, and most of his sympathetic and faithful rendering of external nature". Contrasting the rural with the urban scene, he wrote in The Task:

God made the country, and man made the town,

What wonder then that health and virtue, gifts

That can alone make sweet the bitter draught

That life holds out to all, should most abound

And least bethreatn'd in the fields and groves?

2.2.6 William Blake (1757-1827)

William Blake was a nonconformist who associated with some of the leading radical thinkers of his day, such as Thomas Paine and Mary Wollstonecraft. In defiance of 18th-century neoclassical conventions, he privileged imagination over reason in the creation of both his poetry and images, asserting that ideal forms should be constructed not from observations of nature but from inner visions. He declared in one poem, "I must create a system or be enslaved by another man's". Works such as "The French Revolution" (1791), "America, a Prophecy" (1793), "Visions of the Daughters of Albion" (1793), and "Europe, a Prophecy" (1794) express his opposition to the English monarchy, and to 18th century political and social tyranny in general. Theological tyranny is the subject of *The Book of Urizen* (1794). In the prose work *TheMarriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790- 93), he satirised oppressive authority in church and state. Blake believed that his poetry could be read and understood by common people, but he was determined not to sacrifice his vision in order to become popular. Blake was a man of vision who saw ultimate truth at moments of great illumination. Vision is for him the great secret of life. His entire work - poetry or painting - is an attempt to develop this faculty of vision so that men may seem to understand and thereby forgive and act rightly. His Songs of Innocence (1789) created through a new process called "illuminated printing" are examples of originality. He equated his extreme sense of freedom and happiness to the condition of childhood. In these poems he says that childhood is the original state of happiness, self-enjoyment and unity. In his ''Songs of Experience'' Written in 1794 he expresses his deep indignation at the hypocrisy and cruelty in the world. In ''The Marriage of Heaven and Hell'' he affirms the re-integration of the human soul divided by Innocence (Heaven) and Experience (Hell) through Imagination. Blake's poetry and painting are didactic. He wanted people to free themselves from convention and tradition and depend on their own intuition to realize their potential. The mystical tone, the symbols, the revolutionary ideas and the newness of his art made people think that he was a lunatic. He was more revolutionary in themes, diction and technique than Burns or Wordsworth but his genius was not recognised in his lifetime. He carved a place for himself in World literature because he swam against the current by defying reason in an Age of Reason and because he gave importance to intuition and imagination in an age of scientific skepticism. In his poem "the Little Black Boy" he says:

Look on the rising sun: there God does live

And gives his light, and gives his heat away.

And flowers and trees and beasts and men receive

Comfort in morning joy in the noonday.

2.2.7 Robert Burns (1759-1796)

He is one of the latest, and probably the greatest, of Wordsworth's poetical forebears. With the appearance of Burns one can say that the day of Romanticism is come. There had been false dawns and deceptive premonitions, but with him we have, in the words of Swinburne,

A song too loud for the lark

A light too strong for a star.

Burns is the most beloved poet of the Scots. He is also a symbol of their national spirit. He was

interested in a number of things which were later considered essentially romantic tendencies. He was steeped in Scottish folklore; he loved freedom and he respected the common man. He was attracted by nature; swimming against the current in his time and he also believed that emotion was a better guide than reason. The themes of his poems are generally death, birth, youth, old age, love and grief. Seasonal activities like harvesting and May dances and seasonal changes like snowfall are also used. Settings and dramatic situations are often stylised. Tableaus repeating certain fixed scenes also occur in folk poetry. Burns wrote many traditional and original songs, but he wrote three long poems. Only there was a movement favouring the short, pointed lyrics. Burns wrote a poem titled "To a Mouse" which is certainly a lowly subject. Writing on such subjects was against the grain of Neo-classicism. Another poem, "The Cotter's Saturday Night" shows his interest in the humble people. He had sympathy for the oppressed, sharing the ideals of the French Revolution. He had expressed dangerous sentiments such as the following just before the Revolution in his poem The Jolly Beggars:

A fig for those by law protected!

Liberty's a glorious feast!

Courts for cowards were erected,

Churches built to please the priest.

Repetition as a poetic device to produce an incantatory effect may be found in: "My Love is like a Red, Red Rose". Neo-classical poets like Pope avoided repetition for the sake of economy and for the progression of ideas. Another poem of Burns, "Ye Flowery Banks" is a lament which presents a native view of nature. In this girl's song, the traditional rose-thorn image is used to indicate loss of chastity. Happy nature is contrasted with the melancholy speaker and there is a return to the place of former happiness. Burns resorts to suggestion rather than direct statement in this as well as in the other poems. These are all intimations of Romanticism. The range of Burns' love-songs is great. He could write of love from his personal experience and from a woman's point of view. He could write of love in old age with equal charm. Male protectiveness appears repetitively in many of his love songs including "A Red, Red Rose". Patriotism is another recurring theme in his songs. "Auld Lang Syne" is called "the world's greatest song of human fellowship and friendship". His use of lowly subjects and simple diction was a worthwhile example to Words worth and to other Romantic poets as well.

2.2.8 William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

Wordsworth was born at Cockermouth (Cumberland) on 7th April 1770, a town which is actually outside the Lake District, but well within hail of it. His father John Wordsworth, who was a lawyer, died when William was thirteen years old. The elder Wordsworth left very little money, and that was mainly in the form of a claim on Lord Lonsdale, who refused outright to pay his debt, so William had to depend on the generosity of two uncles, who paid for his schooling at Hawkshead, near Lake Windermere. His mother was Ann. Subsequently Wordsworth went to Cambridge, entering St John's College in 1787. His work at the university was quite undistinguished, and having graduated in 1791 he left with no fixed career in view. After spending a few months in London he crossed over to France (1791), and stayed at Orleans and Blois for nearly a year. An enthusiasm for the Revolution was aroused in him; he himself has chronicled the mood in one of his happiest passages:

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,

But to be young was very heaven!

The spirit of the French Revolution had strongly influenced Wordsworth, and he returned (1792) to England, imbued with the principles of Rousseau and Republicanism. In 1793, were published, "An Evening Walk" and "Descriptive Sketches", written in a stylised idiom and vocabulary of the 18th century. The outbreak of the Reign of Terror, prevented Wordsworth's return to France,

and after gaining several small legacies, he settled with his sister, Dorothy in Dorsetshire. In Dorsetshire Wordsworth became an intimate friend with Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and together they wrote the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), where they sought to use the language of ordinary people in poetry; it includes Wordsworth's poem "Tintern Abbey". The work introduced Romanticism into England and became a manifesto for Romantic poets. In 1800, the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* was published, which included the critical essay outlining Wordsworth's poetic principles. In its *Preface*, Wordsworth describes poetry as the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings."

William Wordsworth brought a completely new approach to the writing of English poetry. His objections to an over-stylised poetic diction, his attitude to nature, his choice of simple incidents and humble people as the subjects of his poetry – these well-known characteristics of his, are all but, minor aspects of his revolutionary achievements. No, earlier English poet, had held such a view, nor in spite of Wordsworth's undoubted influence on later poetry, any subsequent poet, has held it in its purity. Thus, Wordsworth is unique in the history of English poetry. He supported the French Revolution in its early phase but his liberalism gradually dwindled. On the urging of Coleridge, Wordsworth explained the guiding principles of this new movement in his preface to the second edition of the book published in 1800. He married his own cousin Mary Hutchinson on 4th October, 1802. His brother John died 1805, then two of his five children in childhood. He was appointed Poet Laureate in succession to Robert Southey in 1843. In addition to many lyrics, Wordsworth wrote *The Prelude* (1850), a sort of spiritual autobiography like its subtitle *The Growth of a Poet's Mind,* indicates. As the title suggests ''the Prelude'' is the first of a three-part poem *The Recluse*. The second part titled ''The Excursion'' was published in 1814, but the third part was never written. Wordsworth is better known for his short poems like "Tintern Abbey" and "Immortality Ode" than for his long and ambitious works. "Tintern Abbey" recounts three stages in the development of the poet's love of nature; (1) sensuous animal passion, (2) moral influence, and (3) mystical communion. "Michael" deals with the sturdiness of character and nature's healing power. The five "Lucy Poems" are also popular. In "Ode on Intimations of Immortality", Wordsworth attributes a child's wisdom and glory to the unconscious memory of a previous life. "Resolution and Independence" is yet another memorable poem. Wordsworth influenced modern thinking on the natural goodness of childhood, the moral value of simple living and the inspiring and healing powers of nature. Wordsworth seems to have attempted to translate into action, both in his life and in his work principle: "Simple living and high thinking". Wordsworth's personality and poetry were deeply influenced by his love of nature, especially of the sights and scenes of the Lake District, where he spent the mature part of his life. A profoundly, original and sincere thinker, Wordsworth displayed a high seriousness comparable, at times, to Milton's but tempered with tenderness and love of simplicity. Wordsworth's earlier works show the poetic beauty of common place things and people in works like "Margaret", "Peter Bell", "Michael", and "The Idiot Boy". His other well-known poems are, "Lucy", "The Solitary Reaper", "Daffodils", "The Rainbow", "Resolution and Independence", and the sonnet, "The World is Too Much with Us". Though his use of ordinary speech was highly criticised but it helped to get rid of the artificial conventions in poetry of the 18th century diction. Wordsworth – the profound, original and sincere thinker, is considered to be the greatest of English poets, but above all, he would be remembered as the creator of a new poetic tradition. He passed away on April 23, 1850. The whole world lamented on his death. He was called "the high priest of Nature" and even the greatest poet of Nature in the world. His remains were buried in Grasmere Churchyard, as he wished them to be buried there.

Wordsworth's Theory of Poetry

In the preface to the second edition of the Lyrical Ballads (1800) Wordsworth set out his theory of poetry. It reveals a lofty conception of the dignity of that art which is "the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge," and which is the product of "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings," taking

its origin from "emotion recollected in tranquillity." It is a matter of feeling and temperament. True poetry cannot be written without proper mood and temperament. It must flow out freely and willingly from the soul as it cannot be made flow from the artificially laid pipes. Second thing is that poetry is never an intellectual process.

"Poetry is born not in the mind, but in the heart overflowing with feelings"

The qualifications of the poet are on a level with the dignity of his art. To Wordsworth, he is a man "possessed of more than usual organic sensibility," and one who has also "thought long and deeply." How far this view differs from that of poetry as a graceful social accomplishment is quite obvious: it partly explains Wordsworth's sense of his own importance. Apart from these general views on the poet and his art, Wordsworthian dogma can be divided into two portions concerning (a) the subject and (b) the style of poetry.

Regarding subject, Wordsworth declares his preference for "incidents and situations from common life": to obtain such situations, "humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because in that condition the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity." Over these incidents Wordsworth proposes to throw "a certain colouring of the imagination whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect."

Wordsworth's views on poetical style are the most revolutionary of all the ideas in this preface. Discarding the "gaudiness and inane phraseology of many modern writers," he insists that his poems contain little poetic diction, and are written in "a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation." His views on poetic diction he summed up with these words: "there neither is nor can be any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition." The extent to which Wordsworth's own practice as a poet justified his theories is a question which has long occupied the attention of critics. In the realm of subject matter he remained staunch to his declared opinions, for the majority of his poems deal with humble and rustic life. That he was aware of the dangers inherent in his theory he makes clear in these words; "in some instances, feelings, even of the ludicrous, may have been given to my readers by expressions which appeared to me tender and pathetic." It is in this way that he sometimes fails. Generally, though, when Wordsworth writes under a strong emotional stimulus, his style is free from banality and prosaisms. It is touchingly simple in some of his Lucy poems, gay and joyous in other lyrics, and vigorous, with something of a Miltonic sweep and resonance, in his greatest sonnets and blank verse. In truth, though in his best blank verse it is fired by the passion of his imaginative insight to a grandeur above ordinary speech, it does not stray very far from the selection of the real language of men which he advocated. At other times, however, when the emotional stimulus is small or entirely lacking, he writes with his theories in the forefront of his mind, and the result is the prosaic banality of some sections of Simon Lee.

Wordsworth's Theory of Poetic Diction

The term diction refers to the kind of words, phrases, sentences, and sometimes figurative language that constitute any work of literature. When it comes to poetry writing, the question related to the diction always arises. The question of diction is considered as primary because the feelings of the poet must be easily conceived by the readers. The poets of all ages have used distinctive poetic diction. The Neo-classical poetic diction was mainly derived from the classical poets such as Virgil, Spenser, and Milton. These poets used to write poetry by using embellished language and particular decorum. Other prominent features of that period were the extensive use of difficult words, allusions, the personification of abstracts, and avoidance of things considered as low or base. The poetry of that time was treated as something sacred. It was only subjected to the people with high intellect and of high status in the society. Wordsworth prime concern was to denounce such superficial and over-embellished language. Wordsworth's aim was to write poetry which symbolizes the life in its simple

and rustic state. The poetry, for Wordsworth, must be like the part of daily life speech. It should be written in such language that anyone who wants to read it could comprehend it easily. Wordsworth believes that all such ornamented poetry clocks the genuine and passionate feelings of the poets. He only justifies the use of an embellished language of poetry when it is naturally suggested by the feelings or the subject matter of the poetry. The poetry, for Wordsworth, is the expression of natural feelings and these feelings cannot be communicated with the help of fake and version of upper-class speech but with the actual speech of "humble and rustic life". He defines poetic diction as a language of common men. It is not the language of the poet as a class but the language of mankind. It is the simple expression of pure passions by men living close to nature. The poetic language is the natural language; therefore, it must be spontaneous and instinctive. The real poetic diction, in the view of the Wordsworth, is the natural overflow of the feelings, therefore, it is immune to the deliberate decoration of the language. Wordsworth also attributes the quality of giving pleasure to the natural poetic diction. It must not contain any vulgarity and disgusting element. The poet must, through his language, elevate the nature and human feelings.

2.2.9 S.T. Coleridge (1772-1834)

Samuel Taylor Coleridge is the premier poet-critic of modern English tradition, distinguished for the scope and influence of his thinking about literature as much as for his innovative verse. Active in the wake of the French Revolution as a dissenting pamphleteer and lay preacher, he inspired a brilliant generation of writers and attracted the patronage of progressive men of the rising middle class. As a William Wordsworth's collaborator and constant companion in the formative period of their careers as poets, Coleridge participated in the sea change in English verse associated with *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). Samuel Taylor Coleridge was born on October 21, 1772 in the remote Devon village of Ottery St. Mary, the tenth and youngest child of Ann Bowdon Coleridge and John Coleridge, a school-master and vicar whom he was said to resemble physically as well as mentally. In vivid letters recounting his early years he describes himself as "a genuine Sans culotte, my veins uncontaminated with one drop of Gentility." The childhood of isolation and self-absorption which Coleridge describes in these letters has more to do, on his own telling, with his position in the family. Feelings of anomie, unworthiness, and incapacity persisted throughout a life of often compulsive dependency on others. Wordsworth and S.T. Coleridge met in 1795. Coleridge spotted talent in Wordsworth and praised him as "the best poet of the age". The two friends met almost daily, discussed poetry, and composed large quantities of poetry. Their association was so close that the same phrases occur in the poems of both. They collaborated in some poems; they exchanged thoughts and lines of poetry. Coleridge helped Wordsworth in completing the latter's unfinished poems. *Lyrical Ballads* was the fruit of this extraordinary partnership. The famous "Preface" of 1800 was also a result of consultation between the two poets. Of the two sorts of poetry based on the theme, Coleridge agreed to choose the supernatural and Wordsworth the ordinary. Accordingly, Coleridge wrote "The Ancient Mariner" and Wordsworth wrote many of his poems for the "Lyrical Ballads.'' However, serious differences developed between the two on important questions. Coleridge did not agree with many parts of the "Preface". He objected to them as he considered them "erroneous". Some of Wordsworth's statements appeared to contradict "other parts of the same preface and the author's own practice in the greater number of the poems themselves". One such question was the difference between the language of poetry and that of prose. Wordsworth thought that there was no essential difference between the two. Coleridge thought they were different. He argued that metre is essential for poetry which implies passion. More than the other Romantics, he recognised the supremacy of imagination as a creative power. *Biographia Literaria* (1817) is a seminal work dealing with his philosophy of poetry and a critical statement of Romantic ideas. It is in this book that he explains how he had dealt with the supernatural in his poetry. He attempted to give "a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith". Coleridge died in

Highgate, London on 25 July 1834 as a result of heart failure compounded by an unknown lung disorder, possibly linked to his use of opium. According to Coleridge "A poem is that species of composition which is opposed to works of science by proposing for its immediate object pleasure not truth." For him a poem contains the same elements as a prose composition because both using the words. The difference between a poem and a prose composition cannot then lay in the medium for each employs the same medium i.e. words. Coleridge believes that rhyme and meter are essential in order to memorize what is written and to develop a certain kind of attachment to it by getting the feeling of the words through a particular rhyme or rhythm.

"Thirty days hath September,

April, June and November".

Important Works

Poetry

Poems (1796)

"The Ancient Mariner" (in Lyrical Ballads, 1798)

"Translation of Schiller's Wallenstein" (1800)

"Remorse" (1813)

"Cristabel", "Kubla Khan", etc. (1816)

"Sibylline Leaves" (1817)

Prose

"The Friend" (1809-10)

"The Statesman's Manual" (1816)

"Biographia Literaria" (1817)

"Aids to Reflection" (1825)

"Confessions of an Enquiring Spirit" (1844)

"Essay on Method" (1845)

"Table Talk" (1884)

"Anima Poetae" (1895)

Coleridge's Theory of Imagination and Fancy

Imagination in its real sense denotes the working of poetic minds upon external objects or objects visible to the eyes. Imaginative process sometimes adds additional properties to an object or sometimes abstracts from it some of its properties. Therefore imagination thus transforms the object into something new. It modifies and even creates new objects. According to Coleridge imagination has two types: Primary and Secondary Imagination. According to him the primary imagination is 'the living power and prime agent of all human perception'. Primary imagination is perceiving the impression of the outer world through the senses. It is a spontaneous act of the human mind, the image so formed of the outside world unconsciously and involuntarily. It is universal and is possessed by all.

Coleridge's secondary imagination is the poetic vision, the faculty that the poet has "to idealize and unify". It is an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will. It works upon the raw materials that are sensations and impressions supplied the primary imagination. It is the secondary imagination which makes any artistic creation possible and root of all poetic activity. It is considered as shaping and modifying power and is called Essemplastic Imagination.

Coleridge calls Secondary imagination a magical power, it fuses various faculties of human soul, will, emotion, intellect, perception. It fuses internal and external, the subjective and objective. The primary and secondary imaginations do not differ from each other in kind. The difference between them is one of degree. The secondary imagination is more active, more conscious than the primary one. The primary imagination is universal while secondary is a peculiar privilege enjoyed by the artist. The significance of the imagination for Coleridge was that it represented the sole faculty within man that was able to achieve the romantic ambition of reuniting the subject and the object, the world of the self and the world of the nature. For him, the most important aspect of the imagination was that it was active to the highest degree.

Coleridge regards fancy to be the inferior of imagination. It is according to him a creative power. It only combines different things into different shapes, not like imagination to fuse them into one. According to him, it is the process of "bringing together images dissimilar in the main, by source". It has no other countries to play with, but fixities and definities. Fancy in Coleridge's eyes was employed for tasks that were "passive" and mechanical.

2.2.10 Robert Southey (1774-1843)

Closely associated with Wordsworth and Coleridge is Robert Southey; and the three, on account of their residence in the northern lake district, were referred to contemptuously as the "Lakers" by the Scottish magazine reviews. Southey holds his place in this group more by personal association than by his literary gifts. He was born at Bristol, in 1774; studied at Westminster School, and at Oxford, where he found himself in perpetual conflict with the authorities on account of his independent views. He finally left the university and joined Coleridge in his scheme of a Pantisocracy. For more than 50 years he laboured steadily at literature, refusing to consider any other occupation. Southey gradually surrounded himself with one of the most extensive libraries in England, and set himself to the task of writing something every working day. The results of his industry were one hundred and nine volumes, besides some hundred and fifty articles for the magazines, most of which are now utterly forgotten. His most ambitious poems are *Thalaba*, a tale of Arabian enchantment; *The Curse of Kehama*, a medley of Hindu mythology; *Madoc*, a legend of a Welsh prince who discovered the Western world; and *Roderick*, a tale of the last of the Goths. Southey wrote far better prose than poetry, and his admirable *Life of Nelson* is still often read. Besides there are his *Lives of British Admirals*, his *Lives of Cowper and Wesley*, and his *Histories of Brazil and of the Peninsular War*. Southey was made Poet Laureate in 1813, and was the first to raise that office from the low estate into which it had fallen since the death of Dryden. A few of his best known short poems include, "The Scholar", "Auld Cloots", "The Well of St. Keyne", "The Inchcape Rock", and "Lodore".

2.3 THE SECOND GENERATION OF ROMANTIC POETS

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

2.3.1 Lord Byron (1788-1824)

Byron's reputation as a poet and as a personality outside his own country was immense. He had influenced several French and German poets. His life itself was like a romantic poem and he is

the hero of his poems. The phrase ‘‘Byronic hero” has become an independent and critical term to describe a youthful, daring, passionate, cynical, moody and rebellious figure. This type first appeared in ‘‘Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage’’, a long poem which describes in Spenserian stanza a tour in which the hero contemplates on the decaying monuments of European civilisation and on human achievement. Lord Byron, the third of the trio of second generation Romantic poets, was the master of colloquial tone in verse and the inventor of a species of discursive narrative poetry. His first volume, *Fugitive Pieces* (1806) was suppressed, revised and expanded, and later appeared as *Poems on Various Occasions* in 1807. This was followed by *Hours of Idleness* (1807), which provoked such severe criticism from the Edinburgh Review that Byron replied with, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809), a satire in heroic couplets reminiscent of Pope, which brought him immediate fame. Byron left England the same year for a grand tour through Spain, Portugal, Italy and the Balkans. He returned in 1811 with *Cantos I and II of Childe Harold* (1812), a melancholy, philosophic poem in Spenserian stanzas, which made him the social lion of London. It was followed by the verse tales, *The Giaour* (1813), *The Bride of Abydos* (1813), *The Corsair* (1814), *Lara* (1814), *The Siege of Corinth* (1816), and *Parisina* (1816). In 1816, Byron left England, never to return. He passed sometime with Shelley in Switzerland, writing *Canto III of Childe Harold* and *The Prisoner of Chillon*. Settling in Venice (1817), Byron led for a time a life of dissipation, but produced *Canto IV of Childe Harold* (1818), *Beppo* (1818), and *Mazeppa* (1819) and began *Don Juan.* Ranked with Shelley and Keats as one of the great Romantic poets, Byron became famous throughout Europe as the embodiment of Romanticism. His good looks, his lameness, and his flamboyant lifestyle all contributed to the formation of the Byronic legend. By the mid-20th century, his reputation as a poet had been eclipsed by growing critical recognition of his talent as a wit and satirist. Byron’s poetry covers a wide range. In English *Bards and Scotch Reviewers* and in *The Vision of Judgement* (1822) he wrote 18th century satire. He also created the Byronic Hero, who appears consummately in the Faustian tragedy *Manfred* (1817) - a mysterious, lonely, defiant figure whose past hides some great crime. *Cain* (1821) raised a storm of abuse for its skeptical attitude towards religion. The verse tale, *Beppo* is in the ottava rima that Byron later used for his acknowledged masterpiece, *Don Juan* (1814-24), an epic satire combing Byron’s art as a storyteller, his lyricism, his cynicism, and his detestation of convention.

2.3.2 P.B. Shelley (1792-1822)

Shelley was of that second generation of Romantic poets that did not live to be old and respectable. Shelley, in many respects was a Romantic poet par excellence. His strange, and brief life with its eccentric unworldliness, his moods of ecstasy and labour, his swooning idealism, combined to produce a popular image of Romanticism. Shelley’s life continued to be dominated by his desire of a political and social reform, and he was constantly publishing pamphlets. When he was at the university, he wrote several extraordinary pamphlets, one such work, *The Necessity of Atheism*, caused him to be expelled from Oxford. His first important poem, *Queen Mab*, privately published in 1813, set forth a radical system of curing social ills by advocating the destruction of various established institutions. In 1814, Shelley left England for France, with Mary Godwin, daughter of William Godwin. During their first year together, they were plagued by social ostracism and financial difficulties. However, in 1815, Shelley’s grandfather died and left him an annual income. *Laon and Cythna* appeared in 1817, but was withdrawn and reissued the following year as *The Revolt of Islam*; it is a long poem in Spenserian stanzas that tells of a revolution and illustrates the growth of the human mind aspiring toward perfection. Shelley composed the great body of his poetry in Italy. *The Cenci*, a tragedy in verse exploring moral deformity, was published in 1819, followed by his masterpiece, *Prometheus Unbound* (1820). In this lyrical drama, Shelley put forth all his passions and beliefs, which were modeled after the ideas of Plato. *Epipsychidion* (1821) is a poem addressed to Emilia Viviani, whom Shelley met in Pisa, and developed a brief but close friendship. His great elegy, *Adonais* (1821), written in memory of Keats (a pastoral elegy), asserts the immortality of beauty. *Hellas* (1822), a

lyrical drama was inspired by the Greek struggle for independence. His other poems include, *Alastor or the Spirit of Solitude* (1816), it is a long poem in blank verse and is a kind of spiritual autobiography. "Ode to the West Wind", "To a Skylark", "Ozymandias", "The Indian Serenade", and "When the Lamp is Shattered" are his shorter poems. Most of Shelley's poetry reveals his philosophy, a combination of belief in the power of human love and reason, and faith in the perfectibility and ultimate progress of man. Shelley's "A Defence of Poetry" was written as a response to Thomas Love Peacock's. "The Four Ages of Poetry" and also supplements Wordsworth's "Preface" to "Lyrical Ballads". Shelley's platonic ideas find expression in the "Defence". He says that the poet reveals the phenomenal World to mankind. The word, 'poet' as used by Shelley, includes all artists and even philosophers. The artist is a superior being. Art improves imagination and so it is useful. Shelley asserts in the "Defence": "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the World". His lyric poems are superb in their beauty, grandeur and mastery of language. Although Matthew Arnold labeled him an "ineffectual angel", 20th century critics have taken Shelley seriously, recognizing his wit, his gifts as a satirist, and his influence as a social and political thinker.

2.3.3 John Keats (1795-1821)

John Keats is perhaps the greatest of the second generation Romantic poets who blossomed early and died young. Indeed one of the most striking things about Keats is the independence with which he worked out his poetic destiny, the austere devotion with which he undertook his own artistic training. Wordsworth and Coleridge were both interested in philosophy which deflected their attention; Blake's didactic intention coloured much of his work; Byron moved away from poetry to active participation in the liberation of Greece and Shelley's poetry and political beliefs were closely linked. But Keats strove hard throughout his brief career to achieve the essence of poetry. Apprenticed to a surgeon (1811), Keats came to know Leigh Hunt and his literary circle, and in 1816 he gave up surgery to write poetry. His first volume of poems appeared in1817. It included, "I Stood tip-toe Upon a Little Hill", "Sleep and Poetry", and the famous sonnet, "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer."

"On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" written in his twenty-first year may be called his poetic efflorescence. In "Sleep and Poetry" he spoke of his poetic aspirations and his dedication to poetry. "Endymion" was written to compete with Shelley in writing a long poem. "Hyperion" was an ambitious venture like "Paradise Lost" but never completed. Keats wrote his most important poems in a period of nine months, January to September 1819. These are: *The Eve of St. Agnes, La Belle Dame Sans Merci* and all the six great odes and *Lamia*. Keats presents all experience as a mass of inseparable and irreconcilable opposites: Melancholy dwells with Beauty and the dividing line between love and death is thin. He believes that the great end of poetry is "that it should be a friend/to sooth the cares and lift the thoughts of man." With his friend, the artist Joseph Severn, Keats sailed for Italy shortly after the publication of "Lamia", "Isabella; or the Pot of Basil", "The Eve of St. Agnes", and other poems (1820), which contains most of his important work and is probably the greatest single volume of poetry published in England in the 19th century. He died in Rome (1821) at the age of twenty five. Keats's letters are an "indispensable accompaniment to his poetry". They contain some of his germinal ideas such as "negative capability". In a letter to his brothers, he says: "The excellence of every art in its intensity, capable of making all disagreeable evaporate, from their being in close relationship with Beauty and Truth". His letters also show his concern for suffering and evil in the World. He does not accept traditional philosophy or institutional religion as an adequate palliative for the "complexity and contradictions of experience." Not many poets including Shakespeare and Milton could write such distinguished poetry at the age of twenty-four when Keats's poetic career practically came to an end. In spite of his tragically brief career, Keats is one of the most important English poets. He is also among the most personally appealing. Noble, generous, and sympathetic, he was capable not only of passionate love but also of warm, steadfast friendship. Keats is ranked with Shelley and Byron, as one of the three great Romantic poets. Such poems as "Ode to a Nightingale", "Ode on a Grecian Urn",

"To Autumn", and "Ode on Melancholy" are unequaled for dignity, melody and richness of sensuous imagery. Keats' posthumous pieces include "La Belle Dame Sans Merci", in its way is an evocation of Romantic medievalism as "The Eve of St. Agnes". Among his sonnets, familiar ones are, "When I Have Fears that I May Cease to be". "Lines on the Mermaid Tavern", "Fancy", and "Bards of Passion and of Mirth" are delightful short poems. Some of Keats' finest work is the unfinished epic Hyperion. In recent years critical attention has focused on Keats' philosophy, which involves not abstract thought but rather absolute receptivity to experience. This attitude is indicated in his celebrated term "negative capability—to let the mind be a thoroughfare for all thought."

2.4 LET'S SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed the two generations of romantic poets – the early romantics and the second generation of romantics. Discussion goes further about different writers and their theories regarding poetry like – Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats and some others. This will be fruitful for you in having some firsthand knowledge of romantic creed of poetry and its free play of imagination. Though all the Romantic poets have something in common, yet each of them is unique in their own way. Each of these writers has made his own distinctive contribution to Romantic poetry and left an indelible impression on the face of literary history.

2.5 QUESTIONS

1. Why do Romantic poets place such value on imagination and emotions as opposed to rationality?
2. What effect did the Romantic stress on individuality and spontaneity of expression have their choice of poetic forms?
3. Describe how Thomson, Akenside, Gray, Cowper and Collins are precursors of Romanticism.
4. What were the early traits of Romanticism in Robert Burns?
5. Discuss Wordsworth's theory of poetry and Poetic diction.
6. Write a note on Coleridge's Imagination and Fancy.
7. Comment on the uniqueness of Byron and Shelley.
8. Write a note on Keats's achievement as a poet.

2.6 FURTHER READINGS

1. History of English Literature by Edward Albert.

2. A Short History of English Literature by Ifor Evans.

3. English Literature: Its History and Significance by William J. Long.

4. History of English Literature by Legouis and Cazamian.

5. Critical Approaches to Literature by David Daiches.

6. A History of Modern Criticism by Rene Wellek.

7. T.S. Eliot, The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism,

8. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanticism

9. https://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nael/romantic/review/summary.html

10. http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/english/melani/cs6/rom.html

11. William Wordsworth, Select Poems by Dr. B.R. Sharma.

UNIT-3 NOVELISTS AND NOVELS OF THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

Structure

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After completing this unit the learners will be able to:

- Know about novel as a literary genre.
- Know about different novelists of the Romantic Age
- Understand the determining qualities of the novel of the Romantic Age
- Realise the impact of the Romantic Age on the novel.
- Make a difference between the different writing styles of the novel.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit throws light on the progress of the novel during the Romantic Age. Several writers were writing novels which as a literary genre existed much before but romantic novelists embellished it with new subject matters and new ideas. The Romantic Age in English literature was essentially an age of poetry but the temperament of time was also suitable for the growth of the novels. The novelists of the Romantic age exhibited same tendencies in their works which were evident in the poetry of the age. These novelists were great story tellers. They portrayed the realistic social life as well as wrote some exquisite historical romances. Though different types of prose was written during the romantic

period, yet the novel showed the most remarkable development. This was largely due to the works of Scott-who used the novel of manners, which he inherited from Fielding and Smollett, to project into the field of historical romance, the immemorial struggle between conscience and self-will, Providence and Fate.

3.2 THE ROMANTIC NOVELISTS

Romantic Age Novelists and their Novels are characterised by escapist urge off realism, imagination and glorification of nature. Austen, Edgeworth & Scott were the leading face of the fictional prose work and Pride and Prejudice, Sense and Sensibility, Talisman, The absentee were popular novels of the time. The scientific discoveries and inventions were plundering the faith of people on God and religion. The result appeared spreading doubts & despair in the mind of the common people. To, the literary community it was opportune to do something to restore old beliefs and values. Harsh societal realities of the time also demanded an escapism heal for the people. Circumstances clubbed together gave rise to a soothing, sublime literature viz. Romantic age literature, of which Novel was a component. A glance through the novelists of Romantic Age and their works can give you a fair idea as to what they stood for.

3.2.1 Fanny Burney (1752-1840)

Frances Burney, also known as Fanny Burney and later Madame d'Arblay, was an English satirical novelist, diarist and playwright. Fanny Burney was born in Norfolk, England in 1752. She started writing early in her life; but her stepmother did not want her to keep on writing and consequently all her writings were burnt down when she was fifteen years old. Even then she continued writing diaries as it was the only way which she knew how to express herself in a creative way. Her first novel was *Evelina or The History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World* (1778), which was published anonymously. The book met with a great success and the author's name soon leaked out. The book is an admirable picture of manners of the time from the woman's point of view. Of humour there is a pleasant spice, though it is subdued; of characterisation there is singularly little; and there is no sentiment. The success of *Evelina* encouraged her to write more and her other novels are *Cecilia or The Memoirs of an Heiress*, *Camilla* and *The Wanderer*. But *Evelina* was her most popular novel. Fanny Burney died in London in 1840.

3.2.2 Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849)

Anglo-Irish novelist Maria Edgeworth was born in Blackbourton, Oxfordshire, England in 1767. She was the second child of Richard Lovell Edgeworth and Anna Maria Edgeworth. Edgeworth attended Mrs. Lattafiere's school in Derby until 1780. Her family shifted to Ireland in 1782. Her books are numerous but are today little read, though they enjoyed great popularity in her own day. They fall into three classes, short stories for children, such as "Simple Susan", which were collected in *The Parent's Assistant* (1795-1800) and *Early Lessons* (1801-15); Irish tales, which include her best works, *Castle Rackrent* (1800), The Absentee (1809), and *Ormond* (1817); and full-length novels, such as *Belinda* (1801), *Leonora* (1806), *Patronage* (1814), and *Harrington* (1817). With the solitary exception of her finest book, *Castle Rackrent*, in which she kept her moral purpose in the background, all her writings are marred by her overmastering didactic urge. This results in an over-simplification of life and of character in order to show clearly the inevitable triumph of virtue. Yet her children's stories show a fine understanding of, and sympathy with, the outlook of children, and her Irish tales are notable for a level-headed, accurate, and vivid portrayal of many levels of Irish life, and the creation of such fine characters as King Corny, in Ormond, or Thady, in Castle Rackrent. Her field is the limited domestic circle also explored by Jane Austen, and, like the latter she writes in simple, unaffected style. Sir Walter Scott declared that her tales of Irish life inspired his attempt to do something similar for Scotland. After her father's death in 1817, she edited his memoirs, and extended

them with her biographical comments. Her last years were spent working for the relief of the famine - stricken Irish peasants during the Irish Potato Famine (1845-1849). Edgeworth died of a heart attack on 22nd May, 1849.

3.2.3 Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832)

Walter Scott was the greatest novelists of the Romantic Movement of the early nineteenth century. He was both a poet and a novelist. He wrote verse for more than ten years and then shifted to writing novels. He was a prolific writer and has written twenty seven novels. Walter Scott's qualities as a novelist were vastly different from those of Jane Austen. Whereas she painted domestic miniatures, Scott depicted pageantry of history on broader canvases. Jane Austen is precise and exact in whatever she writes; Scott is diffusive and digressive. Jane Austen deals with the quiet intimacies of English rural life free from high passions, struggles and great actions; Scott, on the other hand, deals with the chivalric, exciting, romantic and adventurous life of the Highlanders – people living on the border of England and Scotland, among whom he spent much of his youth, or with glorious scenes of past history.

Scott was born in Edinburgh, of an ancient stock of Border freebooters. At the age of eighteen months he was crippled for life by a childish ailment; and though he grew up to be a man of great physical robustness he never lost his lameness. He was educated at the High School of Edinburgh and at the university; and there he developed that powerful memory which, though it rejected things of no interest to it, held in tenacious grasp a great store of miscellaneous knowledge. His father was a lawyer, and Scott himself was called to the Scottish Bar (1792). As a pleader he had little success, for he was much more interested in the lore and antiquities of the country. He was glad, therefore, to accept a small legal appointment as Sheriff of Selkirkshire (1799). Just before this, after an unsuccessful love-affair with a Perthshire lady, he married, in December 1797, Charlotte Carpenter, of a French royalist family, with whom he lived happily until her death in 1826. In 1806 he obtained the valuable post of Clerk of Session, but for six years he received no salary, as the post was still held by an invalid nominally in charge. In 1812, on receipt of his first salary as Clerk of Session, he removed from his pleasant home of Ashiestiel to Abbotsford, a small estate near Melrose. For the place he paid £4000, which he characteristically obtained half by borrowing and half on security of the poem Rokeby, still unwritten. In 1802 he had assisted a Border printer, James Ballantyne, to establish a business at Edinburgh. In 1805 Scott became secretly a partner. As a printing firm the concern was a fair success; but in an evil moment, in 1809, Scott, with another brother, John Ballantyne, started a publishing business. The new firm was poorly managed from the beginning; in 1814 it was only the publication of *Waverley* that kept it on its legs, but the enormous success of the later *Waverley Novels* gave it abounding prosperity for the time. Then John Ballantyne, a reckless fellow, plunged heavily into further commitments, which entailed great loss; Scott in his easy fashion also drew heavily upon the firm's funds; and in 1826 the whole erection tumbled into ruin. With great courage and sterling honesty Scott refused to take the course that the other principals accepted naturally, and compound with his creditors. Instead he attempted what turned out to be the impossible task of paying the debt and surviving it. His liabilities amounted to £117,000, and before he died he had cleared off £70,000. After his death the remainder was made good, chiefly from the proceeds of Lockhart's Life, and his creditors were paid in full. The gigantic efforts he made brought about his death. He had a slight paralytic seizure in 1830. It passed, but it left him with a clouded brain. He refused to desist from novel-writing, or even to slacken the pace. Other illness followed, his early lameness becoming more marked. On 29 October 1831, in a vain search for improvement, he set off on a voyage to Malta and Naples on board HMS Barham, a frigate put at his disposal by the Admiralty. He was welcomed and celebrated wherever he went. On his journey home he boarded the steamboat Prins Frederik going from Cologne to Rotterdam. While on board he had a final stroke near Emmerich. After local treatment, a steamboat took him to the steamship Batavier, which left for England on 12 June. By pure coincidence, Mary

Martha Sherwood was also on board. She would later write about this encounter. After he was landed in England, Scott was transported back to die at Abbotsford on 21 September 1832. He passed away at the age of sixty one. Scott was buried in Dryburgh Abbey, where his wife had earlier been interred. Lady Scott had been buried as an Episcopalian; at Scott's own funeral, three ministers of the Church of Scotland officiated at Abbotsford and the service at Dryburgh was conducted by an Episcopal clergyman.

Scott was both a poet and a novelist. His earliest poetical efforts were translations from the German *Lenore* (1796), the most considerable of them, is crude enough, but it has much of his later vigour and clatter. In 1802 appeared the first two volumes of *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, to be followed by a third volume in the next year. In some respects the work is a compilation of old material; but Scott patched up the ancient pieces when it was necessary, and added some original poems of his own, which were done in the ancient manner. The best of his own contributions, such as *The Eve of St John*, have a strong infusion of the ancient force and fire, as well as a grimly supernatural element.

In *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805) there is much more originality. The work is a poem of considerable length written in the Christabel metre, and professing to be the lay of an aged bard who seeks shelter in the castle of Newark. As a tale the poem is confused and difficult; as poetry it is mediocre; but the abounding vitality of the style, the fresh and intimate local knowledge, and the healthy love of nature made it a revelation to a public anxious to welcome the new Romantic methods. The poem was a great and instant success, and was quickly followed up with *Marmion* (1808). In popular estimation Marmion is held to be Scott's masterpiece.

Next came *The Lady of the Lake* (1810), which was a still greater success. It has all Scott's usual picturesqueness, and makes particularly effective use of the wild scenery of the Trossachs. In *Rokeby* (1813) the scene shifts to the North of England. As a whole this poem is inferior to its predecessors, but some of the lyrics have a seriousness and depth of tone that are quite uncommon in the spur-and-feather pageantry of Scott's verse. *The Bridal of Triermain* (1813) and *The Lord of the Isles* (1814) mark a decline in quality.

About 1814 Scott almost gave up writing poetry, and save for short pieces, mainly in the novels, wrote no more in verse. As he confessed in the last year of his life, Byron had 'bet' him by producing verse tales that were fast swallowing up the popularity of his own. In 1814 Scott returned to a fragment of a prose romance that he had started and left unfinished in 1805. He left the opening chapters as they stood, and on to them tacked a rapid and brilliant narrative dealing with the Forty-five. This made the novel *Waverley*, which was issued anonymously in 1814. Owing chiefly to its ponderous and lifeless beginning, the book hung fire for a space; but the remarkable remainder was almost bound to make it a success. After *Waverley* Scott went on from strength to strength: *Guy Mannering* (1815), *The Antiquary* (1816), *The Black Dwarf* (1816), *Old Mortality* (1816), Rob Roy (1818), *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818), *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819), and *A Legend of Montrose* (1819). All these novels deal with scenes in Scotland, but not all with historical Scotland. They are not of equal merit, and the weakest is *The Black Dwarf*. Scott now turned his gaze abroad, producing *Ivanhoe* (1820), the scene of which is Plantagenet England; then turned again to Scotland and suffered failure with *The Monastery* (1820), though he triumphantly rehabilitated himself with *The Abbot* (1820), a sequel to the last. Henceforth he ranged abroad or stayed at home as he fancied in *Kenilworth* (1821), *The Pirate* (1822), *The Fortunes of Nigel* (1822), *Peveril of the Peak* (1823), *Quentin Durward* (1823), *St. Ronan's Well* (1824), *Redgauntlet* (1824), *The Betrothed* (1825), and *The Talisman* (1825). By this time such enormous productivity was telling even on his gigantic powers. In the latter books the narrative is often heavier, the humour more cumbrous, and the descriptions more laboured.

Then came the financial deluge, and Scott began a losing battle against misfortune and disease.

But even yet the odds were not too great for him; for in succession appeared *Woodstock* (1826), *The Fair Maid of Perth* (1828), *Anne of Geierstein* (1829), *Count Robert of Paris* (1832), and *Castle Dangerous* (1832). The last works were dictated from the depths of mental and bodily anguish, and the furrows of mind and brow are all over them. Yet frequently the old spirit revives and the ancient glory is renewed.

It should never be forgotten that along with these literary labours Scott was filling the office of Clerk of Session, was laboriously per- forming the duties of a Border laird, and was compiling a mass of miscellaneous prose. Among this last are his editions of *Dryden* (1808) and *Swift* (1814), heavy tasks in themselves; the *Lives of the Novelists* (1821-24); the *Life of Napoleon* (1827), a gigantic work that cost him more labour than ten novels; and the admirable *Tales of a Grandfather* (1828-30). His miscellaneous articles, pamphlets, journals, and letters are a legion in themselves. Scott is chiefly remembered as a historical novelist. His first attempt at a historical novel was *Ivanhoe* (1819) followed by *Kenilworth* (1821), *Quentin Durward* (1823), and *The Talisman* (1825). "The Study of Adventures", "The Realistic Sketch of manners", and "The Saner Elements of the Gothic Romance" have placed him as a great historical novelist.

In all these novels Scott reveals himself as a consummate storyteller. His leisurely unfolding of the story allows of digression particularly in the descriptions of natural scenes or of interiors. Without being historical in the strict sense he conveys a sense of the past age by means of a wealth of colourful descriptions, boundless vitality and with much humour and sympathy. The historical characters which he has so beautifully portrayed that they challenge comparison with the characters of Shakespeare include Queen Elizabeth and Mary Queen of Scott. Besides these he has given us a number of imperishable portraits of the creatures of his imagination. He is a superb master of the dialogue which is invariably true to character. The novels of Scott betray the same imaginative joy in the recreation of the past as his poetry, but the novel offered him a more adaptable and wider field than the narrative poem. It gave him a better opportunity for the display of his varied gifts, his antiquarian knowledge, his observation of life and character, his delight in popular as well as courtly scenes, and his rich humour.

Scott is the first English writer of the historical novel, and he made very enduring contributions to its development in England as well as in Europe. He was by temperament and training perfectly suited to the accomplishment of this task. In the first place he had acquired a profound knowledge of history by his copious reading since his earliest youth. He had the zest of the story-teller, and a natural heartiness which made him love life in all its manifestations. He had an innate sense of the picturesque, developed by his passion for antiquarianism. His conservative temper which turned him away from the contemporary revolutionary enthusiasm, gave him a natural sympathy for the days of chivalry. In the Romantic age, Scott was romantic only in his love of the picturesque and his interest in the Middle Ages.

Scott was the first novelist in Europe who made the scene an essential element in action. He knew Scotland, and loved it, and there is hardly an event in any of his Scottish novels in which we do not breathe the very atmosphere of the place, and feel the presence of its moors and mountains. He chooses the place so well and describes it so perfectly, that the action seems almost to be result of natural environment. Though the style of Scott is often inartistic, heavy and dragging; the love interest in his novels is apt to be insipid and monotonous; he often sketches a character roughly and plunges him into the midst of stirring incidents; and he has no inclinations for tracing the logical consequences of human action—all these objections and criticisms are swept away in the end by the broad, powerful current of his narrative genius. Moreover, Scott's chief claim to greatness lies in the fact that he was the first novelist to recreate the past in such a manner that the men and women of the bygone ages, and the old scenes became actually living, and throbbing with life. Carlyle very pertinently remarked

about Scott's novels: "These historical novels have taught this truth unknown to the writers of history, that the bygone ages of the world were actually filled by living men, not by protocols, state papers, controversies, and abstractions of men."

Keeping in mind his subject matter we can find out some main features of his novels under the following heads:

Rapidity of Production

Scott's great success as a novelist led to some positive evils, the greatest of which was a too great haste in the composition of his stories. His haphazard financial methods, which often led to his drawing upon future profits, also tended to over-production. Haste is visible in the construction of his plots, which are frequently hurriedly improvised, developed carelessly, and finished anyhow. As for his style, it is spacious and ornate, but he has little ear for rhythm and melody, and his sentences are apt to be shapeless. The same haste is seen in the handling of his characters, which sometimes finish weakly after they have begun strongly. An outstanding case of this is Mike Lambourne in *Kenilworth.* It is doubtful if Scott would have done any better if he had taken greater pains. He himself admitted, and to a certain extent gloried in, his slapdash methods. So he must stand the inevitable criticisms that arise when his methods are examined.

His Shakespearian Qualities

Scott has often been called the prose Shakespeare, and in several respects the comparison is fairly just. He resembles Shakespeare in the free manner in which he ranges high and low, right and left, in his search for material. On the other hand, in his character-drawing he lacks much of the Elizabethan's deep penetration. His villains are often melodramatic and his heroes and heroines wooden and dull. His best figures are either Lowland Scots of the middle and lower classes or eccentrics, whose idiosyncrasies are skilfully kept within bounds. He has much of Shakespeare's genial, tolerant humour, in which he strongly resembles also his great predecessor Fielding. It is probably in this large urbanity that the resemblance to Shakespeare is observed most strongly.

Sir Walter Scott is a storytelling author. The story is in third person, but when he wishes to explain something to the reader he breaks in and resorts to first person. His point of view is of one watching an exciting drama and relaying what he sees with suitable explanation so that none of the excitement is lost. He uses a disjointed flashback. He carries the action of one group to a certain point and then goes back to pick up another group to bring it into logical position. It is as though he were weaving together varied colored threads into one exquisite pattern. It is his task to put the threads together so that the finished piece of cloth is one carefully wrought, panoramic scene. Foremost are the figures, often in violent action, against a background of vivid natural beauty. To miss the description is to rob the piece of its wholeness and to be impatient with the archaic and distinctive words is to destroy the medieval setting. He gives structural clues to move the story along, such as Rebecca's warning of robbers to Gurth, which prepares the reader for the swineherd's encounter with the thieves; Fang's howling precipitates the capture by De Bracy; the phrase which the Prior drops, "the witch of Endor," signifies Rebecca's trial.

His Sense of History

Scott's formula for the historical novel was an unmistakable innovation which became a pattern for those who followed him. His story is pure fiction, his hero is imaginary. For example, it is Ivanhoe who is the hero, not Richard Coeur de Lion; the setting is as authentic as possible, and the events of history are quite accurate. As Henry Beers says, "He possessed the true enchanter's wand, the historic imagination. With this in his hand he raised the dead past to life, made it once more conceivable, made it even actual." Furthermore, he made history romantic, and to those who feel history to be dull, he makes it exciting. Many authors have written histories more accurate in detail

and with more attention to chronology; some have written romances more tender and ethereal, but no one combines history and romance and makes them both more lovely and believable.

Scott read history with an avidity probably unequaled by any novelist so that, although he was sometimes careless, his work is authentic in spite of it. He loved scenery only when it had a castle or a battle site which related it to history. Where this happy combination resulted he fashioned a story. His friend Mr. Morritt of Rokesbury said of him, "He was but half-satisfied with the most beautiful scenery when he could not connect it with some local legend."

In his historical romances in general, and in Ivanhoe in particular, Scott captured the spirit of the age; he imitated the speech, the rude humor, the customs, and reconstructed a past age until it became a living present. He did not go deep into the cause of a historical event, just as he did not go deep into spiritualities, or men's thoughts, but he described in vivid detail and told a whopping good story. More particularly in Ivanhoe he was not always accurate, but he did more for the medieval era historically than almost anyone else to make it a part of the body of knowledge. It is with the description of battles and the external aspects of knighthood, the outlaws' bands, and the Norman-Saxon conflict that Scott is especially interesting. He is never satirical and only mildly ironic, but he has a verve for color and action that is his specialty. Only at times, when he interrupts his story to add extraneous material, is the reader led away from the action.

One writer sees historical value in the treatment of the smoldering hatred by the Saxon for the Normans which was brought into harmony and finally dissolved under King Richard. He also believes that the account of the brothers Richard and John is quite accurate, except that King Richard was probably less gallant than he appears here. He allows the bigotry of the Grand Master of the Templars and discredits the love of Bois-Guilbert for the Jewess as highly improbable. Another point of historical interest is the resemblance of Shakespeare's King John to the Prince John of Ivanhoe. That Scott was indeed a student of Shakespeare is evident from the many quotes from Shakespeare's plays. Scott drew heavily on Shakespeare as well as Chaucer. Isaac and Rebecca Hark back to Shylock and Jessica of the *Merchant of Venice*. Wamba resembles the fools of *King Lear*, *Twelfth Night*, and *As You Like It*. Richard I has the qualities of a national leader found in *Henry V*. Even the device of a funeral for one not dead can be traced to *Cymbeline* and *Romeo and Juliet*; Athelstane echoes Cloten. *Ivanhoe* marks a departure from the Scottish themes employed by Scott prior to the year 1819. He felt that he was exhausting his material and that he needed a change of scene. As a result he produced a masterpiece that has influenced most tales of derring-do written since.

3.2.4 Jane Austen (1775-1817)

Jane Austen's qualities as a novelist were vastly different from those of Scott. Scott depicted pageantry of history on broader canvases, while on the contrary Austen painted domestic miniatures. Jane Austen is precise and exact in whatever she writes; Scott is diffusive and digressive. Jane Austen deals with the quiet intimacies of English rural life free from high passions, struggles and great actions; Scott, on the other hand, deals with the chivalric, exciting, romantic and adventurous life of the Highlanders-people living on the border of England and Scotland, among whom he spent much of his youth, or with glorious scenes of past history. Austen did for the English novel precisely what the Lake poets did for English poetry. She refined and simplified it, making it a true reflection of English life. As Wordsworth made a deliberate effort to make poetry natural and truthful, Jane Austen also from the time she started writing her first novel - Pride and Prejudice, had in her mind the idea of presenting English country society exactly as it was, in opposition to the romantic extravagance of Mrs. Radcliffe and her school. Like the Lake poets, she met with scanty encouragement in her own generation. Jane Austen brought good sense and balance to the English novel which during the Romantic age had become too emotional and undisciplined. Giving a loose rein to their imagination the novelist of the period carried themselves away from the world around them into a romantic past or

into a romantic future. The novel, which in the hands of Richardson and Fielding had been a faithful record of real life and of the working of heart and imagination, became in the closing years of the eighteenth century the literature of crime, insanity and terror. It, therefore, needed castigation and reform which were provided by Jane Austen. During the time of great turmoil and revolution in various fields, she quietly went on with her work, making no great effort to get a publisher, and, when a publisher was got, contenting herself with meagre remuneration and never permitting her name to appear on a title page. In the words of W.L. Cross "She is one of the sincerest examples in English literature of art for art's sake". Living a quiet life she published her six novels anonymously, which have now placed her among the front rank of English novelists.

Jane Austen was born on 16 December, 1775 in the village of Steventon in Hampshire. His father George Austen was a Hampshire clergyman and rector of Dean and her mother was Cassandra Leigh. After the death of rector his wife and two daughters moved to the neighbourhood of Southampton, where the majority of Austen's novels were written. In 1795, Austen met Tom Lefroy and had a romantic affair which could not lasted long and she devoted herself writing novels. Austen was feeling unwell by early 1816, but ignored the warning signs. By the middle of that year, her decline was unmistakable, and she began a slow, irregular deterioration. The majority of biographers rely on Zachary Cope's 1964 retrospective diagnosis and list her cause of death as Addison's disease, although her final illness has also been described as resulting from Hodgkin's lymphoma. None of her books were published in her lifetime and had not her name on them. They were described as being written "By a Lady." She died on 8th July1817.

Her first novel was *First Impressions* which later came to known as *Pride and Prejudice*, written in 1796-97 and published in 1813. It is a novel of manners, it follows the character development of Elizabeth Bennet, the protagonist of the book, who learns about the repercussions of hasty judgments and comes to appreciate the difference between superficial goodness and actual goodness. In it, as in all her works, we have middle-class people pursuing the common round. The heroine is a girl of spirit, but she has no extra-ordinary qualities; her prejudice and the pride of rank and wealth are gently but pleasingly titillated, as if they are being subjected to an electric current of carefully selected intensity. The style is smooth and unobtrusive, but covers a delicate pricking of irony that is agree- able and masterly in its quiet way. Nothing quite like it had appeared before in the novel. In unobtrusive and dexterous art the book is considered to be her masterpiece.

Her second novel was *Elinor and Marianne*, which was later known as *Sense and Sensibility*, written in 1797-98 and published in 1811 and it followed the same general lines as its predecessor. It was written in epistolary form (novel written in the form of letters). It tells the story of the Dashwood sisters, Elinor (age 19) and Marianne (age 16½) as they come of age. They have an older half-brother, John, and a younger sister, Margaret (age 13). The novel follows the three Dashwood sisters and their widowed mother as they are forced to leave the family estate at Norland Park and move to Barton Cottage, a modest home on the property of distant relative Sir John Middleton. There Elinor and Marianne experience love, romance, and heartbreak. The novel is set in South West England, London, and Sussex, probably between 1792 and 1797.

Sense and Sensibility was followed by *Northanger Abbey*, written in1798 and published posthumously in 1818. It is somewhat a parody of the Gothic novel. The book begins as a burlesque of the Radcliffian horror novel, which was then all the rage. The heroine, after a visit to Bath, is invited to an abbey, where she imagines romantic possibilities, but is in the end ludicrously undeceived. The incidents of the novel are commonplace and the characters flatly average. Yet the treatment is deft and touched with the finest needle-point of satiric observation.

Then came *Mansfield Park* which was written between 1811 and 1813, though published in 1814. The novel did not receive any public reviews until 1821.The novel tells the story of Fanny Price,

starting when her overburdened family sends her at the age of ten to live in the household of her wealthy aunt and uncle and following her development into early adulthood. From early on critical interpretation has been diverse, differing particularly over the character of the heroine, Austen's views about theatrical performance and the centrality or otherwise of ordination and religion, and on the question of slavery. Some of these problems have been highlighted in the several later adaptations of the story for stage and screen.

Mansfield Park was followed by *Emma*, probably written in 1815 and published in 1816. It is set in the fictional country village of Highbury and the surrounding estates of Hartfield, Randalls and Donwell Abbey, and involves the relationships among people from a small number of families. The novel was first published in December 1815, although the title page is dated 1816. As in her other novels, Austen explores the concerns and difficulties of genteel women living in Georgian-Regency England. Emma is a comedy of manners. Before she began the novel, Austen wrote, "I am going to take a heroine whom no one but myself will much like." In the first sentence, she introduces the title character as "Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and a happy disposition... had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her." Emma is spoiled, headstrong, and self-satisfied; she greatly overestimates her own matchmaking abilities; she is blind to the dangers of meddling in other people's lives; and her imagination and perceptions often lead her astray.

Then there appeared *Persuasion* written between1815-16 and published in 1818. The story revolves around Anne Elliot, an Englishwoman of 27 years, whose family moves to lower their expenses and reduce their debt by renting their home to an admiral and his wife. The wife's brother, Captain Frederick Wentworth, was engaged to Anne in 1806, but the engagement was broken when Anne was persuaded by her friends and family to end their relationship. Anne and Captain Wentworth, both single and unattached, meet again after a separation lasting almost eight years, setting the scene for a second, well-considered chance at love and marriage for Anne.

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

As a novelist Jane Austen worked in a narrow field. She was the daughter of a humble clergyman living in a little village. Except for short visits to neighbouring places, she lived a static life but she had such a keen power of observation that the simple country people became the characters of her novels. The chief duties of these people were of the household, their chief pleasures were in country gatherings and their chief interest was in matrimony. It is the small, quiet world of these people, free from the mighty interests, passions, ambitious and tragic struggles of life that Jane Austin depicts in her novels. But in spite of these limitations she has achieved wonderful perfection in that narrow field on account of her acute power of observation, her fine impartiality and self-detachment, and her quiet, delicate and ironical humour. Her circumstances helped her to give that finish and delicacy to her work, which have made them artistically prefect. Novel-writing was a part of her everyday life, to be placed aside should a visitor come, to be resumed when he left, to be pursued unostentatiously and tranquilly in the midst of the family circle. She knew precisely what she wanted to do, and she did it in the way that suited her best. Though in her day she did not receive the appreciation she deserved, posterity has given her reward by placing this modest, unassuming woman who died in her forties, as one of the greatest of English novelists.

Jane Austen is among the high rank English novelists, though she had written only six novels and the seventh novel remained unfinished because she died before finishing it. Here are some main traits of her timeless writing style which has touched many readers heart:

Her distinctive literary style relies heavily on a combination of parody, burlesque, irony, free indirect speech and a degree of realism. She uses parody and burlesque for comic effect and to critique the portrayal of women in 18th-century sentimental and Gothic novels. Austen extends her critique by highlighting social hypocrisy through irony; she often creates an ironic tone through free indirect speech in which the thoughts and words of the characters mix with the voice of the narrator. The degree to which critics believe Austen's characters have psychological depth informs their views regarding her realism. While some scholars argue that Austen falls into a tradition of realism because of her finely executed portrayal of individual characters and her emphasis on "the everyday", others contend that her characters lack a depth of feeling compared with earlier works, and that this, combined with Austen's polemical tone, places her outside the realist tradition.

Her skilfully constructed plots are severely unromantic. Her first work, beginning as a burlesque of the horrible in fiction, finishes by being an excellent example of her ideal novel. As her art develops, even the slight casualties of common life – such an incident, for example, as the elopement that appears in Pride and Prejudice become rarer; with the result that the later novels, such as Emma, are the pictures of everyday existence. Life in her novels is governed by an easy decorum, and moments of fierce passion, or even deep emotion, never occur. Only the highest art can make such plots attractive, and Jane Austen's does so. Her plots are fundamentally about education; her heroines come to see themselves and their conduct more clearly, and become better, more moral people. While Austen steers clear of the formal moralizing common in early19th century literature, morality - characterised by manners, duty to society and religious seriousness is a central theme of her works. Throughout her novels, serious reading is associated with intellectual and moral development. The extent to which the novels reflect feminist themes has been extensively debated by scholars; most critics agree that the novels highlight how some female characters take charge of their own worlds, while others are confined, physically and spiritually. Almost all Austen's works explore the precarious economic situation in which women of the late-18th and early19th centuries found themselves.

Her characters are developed with minuteness and accuracy. They are ordinary people, but are convincingly alive. She is fond of introducing clergymen, all of whom strike the reader as being exactly like clergymen, though each has his own individual characteristics. She has many characters of the first class, like the servile Mr. Collins in Pride and Prejudice, the garrulous Miss Bates in Emma, and the selfish and vulgar John Thorpe in Northanger Abbey. Her characters are not types, but individuals. Her method of portrayal is based upon acute observation and a quiet but incisive irony. Her male characters have a certain softness of thew and temper, but her female characters are almost unexceptionable in perfection of finish.

3.2.5 John Galt (1779-1839)

John Galt was a Scottish novelist, entrepreneur, and political and social commentator. Galt has been called the first political novelist in the English language, due to being the first novelist to deal with issues of the Industrial Revolution. He was born in Ayrshire, and there he passed the early years of his life, afterward moved to Greenock. After spending some years as a clerk, he moved to London to read for the Bar, but he abandoned his studies to take up a business appointment abroad. After much travelling he settled in Scotland, and produced a large amount of literary work. He engaged unsuccessfully in business transactions, then took once more to writing novels and to journalism. He died on 11 April 1839. He was buried in the family tomb of his parents in the New Burying Ground in Greenock (now called the Inverkip Street Cemetery). The best of his novels are *The Ayrshire Legatees*; or, the *Pringle Family* (1821), in the form of a letter-series, containing much amusing Scottish narrative; *The Annals of the Parish* (1821), his masterpiece, which is the record of a fictitious country minister, doing in prose very much what Crabbe had done in verse; *The Provost* (1822); and *The Entail*; or, the *Lairds of Grippy* (1823). Galt's novels are best known for their depiction of Scottish

rural life, tinged with ironic humour.

3.2.6 Susan Ferrier (1781-1854)

Susan Edmonstone Ferrier was a Scottish novelist. Her novels provide vivid accounts of Scottish life and present sharp views on women's education. Her novels remained popular throughout the 19th century. She wrote only three novels; *Marriage*, *The Inheritance* and *Destiny*, all of which become very popular. *Destiny* was dedicated to Sir Walter Scott. In 1841 Ferrier sold the copyrights to the three novels to Richard Bentley, who reissued them in an illustrated edition with authorial revisions. In 1851 this edition was reprinted, with Ferrier's name included for the first time as the author. The library edition of 1881 and 1882 included a Memoir.

3.2.7 Washington Irving (1783-1859)

Irving was an American short-story writer, essayist, biographer, historian, and diplomat of the early 19th century. Irving was born and raised in Manhattan to a merchant family. He made his literary debut in 1802 with a series of observational letters to the Morning Chronicle, written under the pseudonym Jonathan Oldstyle. He temporarily moved to England for the family business in 1815, where he achieved fame with the publication of *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent* which was serialised from 1819 to 1820. He continued to publish regularly throughout his life, and he completed a five-volume biography of George Washington just eight months before his death at the age of 76 in Tarrytown, New York. His *History of New York* (1809) was the comic history of an imaginary Dutchman called Knickerbocker. The humour now appears strained and overdone, but the book is written with ease and grace. His novel *The Sketch-book* (1820) brought his name before the English public. The volume is a collection of short tales and sketches, the two favourites, those of "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow", being the best of his productions. It was followed by *Bracebridge Hall* (1822), a series of sketches of the life of the English squirearchy, done in the Addisonian manner. His later travels helped him in the writing of *Tales of a Traveller* (1824), *Legends of the Alhambra* (1832), and other works. As a story-teller Irving lacks animation and fire, but his humour in the later books is facile, though thin, and his descriptions are sometimes impressive. His style reminds the reader of that of Goldsmith. He produced other historical works, such as *History of the Life and Voyages of Columbus* (1828), *The Conquest of Granada* (1829), and his *Life of Washington* (1859), more noteworthy for the ease of their narrative than for their deep learning or insight.

3.2.8 Thomas Love Peacock (1785-1866)

English writer Thomas Love Peacock, born in Dorset, was the son of Samuel Peacock, a glass merchant and Sarah Love. In 1819, he joined East India Company for a job. Peacock is best known for his essay *The Four Ages of Poetry* (1820), which provoked Shelley's famous *Defence of Poetry*. It was first published in the journal *Literary Miscellany* in 1820. In this essay, he wrote about the gradual origin and development of poetry in four ages: Age of Iron; Age of Gold; Age of Silver and Age of Brass. Poetry originated in the Iron Age, in which rude brads celebrated in rough numbers the exploits of ruder chiefs, in days when every man was warrior. The golden age was the age of the noblest poetic productions, when poetry tended to become retrospective. This was followed by the artificial silver age in which poets were casted or limited the poems of the age of gold. The Brass age was the age, of poetic decay and decline. The current brass era was marked, according to Peacock, by poems of Verbose and minutely detailed description of thoughts, passions, actions, persons and things. Peacock, in this essay, defined the poet as a semi-barbarian in a civilised community. Apart from this essay, Peacock wrote several other works such as *Recollections of Childhood: The Abbey House* (1837), *Memories of Shelley* (1858-62) and novels such as *Headlong Hall* (1816), *Melincourt* (1817), *Nightmare Abbey* (1818), *Maid Marian* (1822), *The Misfortunes of Elphin* (1829) and *Gryll Grange*

(1860). Peacock succeeded James Mill as chief examiner for the East India Company in 1836 and retired on a pension in 1856. He died on the 23rd January, 1866 at Lower Halliford.

3.2.9 James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851)

Cooper was born in New Jersey, and educated at Yale College. He passed his boyhood on an ancestral estate near Lake Otsego, and so gained much material for his Indian works. He was in the Navy for six years, and then retired to write books. He travelled and wrote much. He was a man of acrimonious temper, and his extravagant estimation of his abilities drew him into many quarrels. His first novel, *Precaution* (1820), was a conventional study of society and was of little merit. Then *The Spy* (1821) began a series of vigorous adventure stories, some of which, like *The Pilot* (1824) and *The Red Rover* (1828), deal with the sea. Cooper's technical knowledge and appreciation of the beauty of the sea are here used to advantage, though his characters are stiff. The best of his works, however, are the Leather stocking novels, which deal with frontier life in Indian Territory. They include *The Pioneers* (1823), *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), *The Pathfinder* (1840), and *The Deerslayer* (1841). Their view of the Indian is romanticised, but they opened up a new field for American fiction, and have plenty of incident and suspense. Cooper set himself up as a rival of Scott, but he has little of Scott's ability. He lacks humour, his characters are, with rare exceptions such as Leather stocking, lifeless and unconvincing, and his style is wordy and heavy. But at times he can make his story move rapidly, and he is skilful in his suggestion of the charm and dangers of the primeval forest.

Cooper attempted many other forms of literature, including highly controversial novels about Europe, bitter satire, a history of the American Navy, and propagandist attacks on cruelty and oppression. But he wrote too much and too carelessly. He affected to despise popular criticism, but, except for his Indian tales, his work has little permanent value.

3.2.10 Frederick Marryat (1792-1848)

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

3.2.11 George P.R. James (1801-1860)

James was another follower of the method of Scott, and he was responsible for a hundred and eighty-nine volumes, chiefly novels. He was born in London; travelled abroad; settled down to novel-writing; on the strength of some serious historical work was appointed Historiographer Royal; entered the Consular Service; and died at Venice. *Richelieu, A Tale of France* (1829), which bears a strong resemblance to *Quentin Durward*, was his earliest, and is by many considered to be his best novel. Others include *Darnley, or the Field of the Cloth of Gold* (1830), *De l'Orme* (1830), *The Gipsey* (1835), and *Lord Montagu's Page* (1858). As was almost inevitable with such mass-production, he makes his novels on a stock pattern. He is fond of florid pageantry, and can be rather ingeniously mysterious in his plots. He has little power in dealing with his characters, and no imaginative grasp of history. In style he is pompous and monotonous, and his dialogue is stilted and formal.

3.2.12 William Harrison Ainsworth (1805-1882)

Ainsworth, the son of a solicitor, was born at Manchester, where he was educated at the grammar school. After some attempt to study law he took to literature as a career. He tried publishing without success, and then, in 1840, became editor of *Bentley's Miscellany*. In 1853 he acquired *The New Monthly Magazine*. He died at Reigate. An early imitator of Scott, Ainsworth wrote a great number of novels, which cover many periods of English history. The first was *Sir John Chiverton* (1826), written in collaboration with John Aston, but his great success was scored with *Rookwood* (1834). A few of the many others were *Jack Sheppard* (1839), an immense success, *The Tower of London* (1840), *Old St. Paul's* (1841), *Windsor Castle* (1843), *The Star Chamber* (1854), *The Constable of the Tower* (1861), and *Preston Fight, or the Insurrection of 1715* (1875). Ainsworth possesses little of Scott's genius, for his handling of historical material is crude and cavalier in the extreme. His brutal realism and crude sensationalism give his work a melodramatic effect similar to that of the Radcliffian horror novel. His characterisation is poor and his style unpolished, but when he is in the right vein he can give the reader a vigorous narrative, seen, perhaps, at its best in his account of Turpin's ride to York in *Rookwood.*

Romantic Age was a well distinguished era and hence its Novelists and Novels. In attaining a different identity of course, the societal conditions were in the hindsight. De-facto, the 19th century was an era of great political, social, economic and religious activities. Politically, it was a period of transition from aristocratic rule to democracy. And, socially, it was an era of unrest because of the impact of the Industrial Revolution. The age was also witnessing the growing gulf between the poor and the rich. The scientific discoveries and inventions shook the faith of people on God and religion. And, the waves caused a sense of doubt and despair in the mind of the common people. These circumstances were appropriate for the growth of Romantic novelists.

Thus, we find that the Romantic Age Novels contributed immensely towards the development of literature. Of course, it was not the richest period in this direction but the contributions of novelists in this age can never be undermined.

3.3 LET'S SUM UP

Throughout this unit we have centred on the novelists and novels of the Romantic era. The Romantic novel along with its form and structure was centre of focus for this unit. The discussion further expanded to the development of novel as a literary genre in this era. Different writers showed immense variety of this literary form through their creative writing and contributed their best to flourish it as a literary genre. Though during the period novel was not at its best yet several writers through their genuine works helped much in its long journey as a literary form. We have also discussed how the different writers saw this era from their different point of view and portrayed it in their works. Some works were having realistic approach and some were imparted with historical sense of past glory.

3.4 QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on the development of the novel as a literary genre during the Romantic age.
2. What remarkable features do you find in the novels of the Romantic era?
3. Estimate Walter Scotts as a Romantic novelist.
4. Estimate Water Scott as a Historical novelist.
5. Discuss the contribution of Jane Austen as a novelist among other novelists of the Romantic era.

6. Do you think that Austen is a Home-Spun philosopher?

7. What are the main features of the Austen's novels?

8. Estimate the contribution of minor novelists of the Romantic era in the development of novel.

3.5 FURTHER READINGS

- Critical Approaches to Literature by David Daiches.
- Robert Barnard's A Short History of English Literature.
- Stephen Coote's *The Penguin Short History of English Literature.*
- Andrew Sanders' *The Short Oxford History of English Literature.*
- A Short History of English Literature by Ifor Evans.
- English Literature: Its History and Significance by William J. Long
- History of English Literature by Edward Albert.
- The French Revolution: From its Origins to 1793 by Georges Lefebvre.
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanticism.
- https://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nael/romantic/review/summary.html
- http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/english/melani/cs6/rom.html

UNIT- 4 IMPORTANT LITERARY TRENDS AND TEXTS

Structure

4.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- Know about different trends in poetry, prose, fiction and drama.
- Analyse how the different writers use these trends in their works.
- Understand how the social, political and cultural predicament of the Romantic age forced writers to deviate from preceding literary trends.
- Analyse how the masters of literary productivity expressed their thoughts through these trends in literature.
- Analyse the various literary forms popular during the Romantic period, such as the lyrical ballad, the sonnet, and the novel, and evaluate their impact on the literature of the time.
- Evaluate the legacy of Romanticism on subsequent literary movements and its influence on modern literature and culture.
- Compare Romantic literary trends with those of preceding and succeeding literary movements, such as Neoclassicism and Realism, to understand their evolution and impact.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Romantic era was characterised by a shift away from the rationalism and order of the Enlightenment towards an emphasis on emotion, imagination, and individualism. The publication of Lyrical Ballads by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge in 1798 is often cited as the beginning of the Romantic Movement in English literature. In the second half of the 18th century the writers began to breaks the restrictions of the Neo-classical age, and began to seek wholeheartedly a new freedom of expression. The spirit of romanticism, the fancy and imagination, the savage enthusiasm of rural life, all were getting preference over the dry intellectualism of the 18th century. The Romantic Movement, which Victor Hugo calls ‘liberalism in literature’, is simply the expression of life as seen by imagination, rather than by prosaic ‘common sense’, which was the central doctrine of life in the 18th century. The Romantic period saw significant developments and innovations across

all major literary genres. This transition wasn't abrupt but gradual, with many writers showing both Neoclassical and Romantic tendencies in their work. The shift in literary forms during this period reflected broader changes in philosophy, politics, and society, as Europe moved from the Age of Enlightenment into the more turbulent and emotionally charged Romantic era.

4.2 TRENDS IN THE ROMANTIC AGE LITERATURE

The Romantic Age, spanning from the late 18th to the mid-19th century, introduced significant literary trends that reshaped the landscape of English literature. Central to this period was the emphasis on emotion and individual experience, contrasting sharply with the rationality of the Enlightenment. Romantic literature often explored the sublime and the mystical, celebrating nature as a source of inspiration and spiritual renewal. Key trends included the revival of lyrical poetry, with a focus on personal expression and imagination, as seen in the works of William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The era also witnessed the rise of the Gothic novel, characterized by its fascination with the supernatural and the macabre. Additionally, Romanticism brought about a renewed interest in folk traditions and the exploration of national identity, reflected in the works of poets and novelists who sought to capture the unique spirit of their times. These trends collectively marked a departure from earlier literary conventions and laid the groundwork for future literary movements.

4.2.1 Trend in Poetry

Lyric Poetry

Lyric poetry became a cornerstone of Romantic literature, characterised by its expression of personal emotions, thoughts, and experiences. This form saw significant development during the period.

Personal lyrics

Personal lyrics in the Romantic era were intimate expressions of the poet's inner world. William Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" (1807) exemplifies this trend. Other notable examples include Lord Byron's "She Walks in Beauty" (1814) and Percy Bysshe Shelley's "To Night" (1821).

Nature lyrics

Nature became a central theme and often a character in Romantic poetry. Shelley's "To a Skylark" (1820) is a prime example. The verse form (five-line stanzas with a rhyme scheme of ABABB) showcases Romantic experimentation with traditional forms. John Keats's "To Autumn" (1820) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Frost at Midnight" (1798) are other significant nature lyrics of the period.

Ballads

The ballad form experienced a revival during the Romantic period, with poets adapting traditional folk ballads and creating new "Literary" ballads.

Traditional ballads

Romantic poets often drew inspiration from folk traditions. John Keats's "La Belle Dame sans Merci" (1819) exemplifies this trend. Its structure (quatrains with an ABCB rhyme scheme) echoes folk ballad forms. Other examples include Sir Walter Scott's "The Eve of St. John" (1800) and Thomas Moore's "The Minstrel Boy" (1813).

Lyrical Ballads

The publication of "Lyrical Ballads" (1798) by Wordsworth and Coleridge marked a turning point in Romantic poetry. Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is a prime example. Its complex structure (longer than traditional ballads, with varying stanza lengths) showcases the Romantic

adaptation of the form. Wordsworth's "Lucy Gray" (1799) and Lord Byron's "The Prisoner of Chillon" (1816) further exemplify the development of the lyrical ballad.

The Odes

The ode form underwent significant transformation during the Romantic period, with poets adapting classical models to suit new expressive needs.

Pindaric odes

Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood" (1804) is a notable example of the Romantic Pindaric ode. Its irregular rhyme scheme and varying line lengths reflect the poem's emotional intensity. Percy Bysshe Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" (1820) is another significant Pindaric ode of the period.

Horatian odes

John Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (1819) exemplifies the Romantic adaptation of the Horatian ode. Its use of ekphrasis (vivid description of a work of art) became a characteristic feature of Romantic poetry. Other notable Horatian odes include Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale" (1819) and Shelley's "To a Skylark" (1820).

Elegies

Elegiac poetry flourished during the Romantic period, often blending personal grief with broader philosophical reflections.

Personal elegies

Shelley's "Adonais" (1821), written in memory of John Keats, is a prime example of the Romantic personal elegy. Its Spenserian stanza form (nine lines rhyming ABABBCBCC) allows for complex, sustained argumentation. Lord Byron's "When We Two Parted" (1808) offers a more intimate, lyrical approach to personal elegy.

Pastoral elegies

While technically pre-Romantic, John Milton's "Lycidas" (1637) had a significant influence on Romantic elegiac poetry. Its irregular rhyme scheme and varying line lengths influenced Romantic formal experimentation. William Wordsworth's "Elegiac Stanzas Suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle" (1807) shows the continuing influence of the pastoral elegy tradition in the Romantic period.

Sonnets

The sonnet form experienced a revival during the Romantic period, with poets adapting traditional forms to new expressive purposes.

Petrarchan sonnets

Shelley's "Ozymandias" (1818) is a famous example of a Romantic Petrarchan sonnet. William Wordsworth's "The World Is Too Much with Us" (1802) is another significant Petrarchan sonnet of the period.

Shakespearean sonnets

John Keats's "Bright Star" (1819) exemplifies the Romantic use of the Shakespearean sonnet form. Wordsworth's sonnet "Composed upon Westminster Bridge" (1802) shows how Romantic poets adapted the Shakespearean form to new subjects, particularly the contemplation of nature and urban landscapes.

Dramatic Monologues

While the dramatic monologue is more commonly associated with Victorian poetry, its roots can be traced to the Romantic period.

Early forms

Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (1798), while not a dramatic monologue in the strictest sense contains elements that influenced the development of the form. Lord Byron's "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" (1812-1818), particularly in its later cantos, also shows early characteristics of the dramatic monologue.

Epic and Narrative Poetry

Romantic poets revived and transformed the epic and narrative poetry traditions.

Epic poems

Blake's "Milton" (1804-1810) represents a unique Romantic approach to epic poetry. Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound" (1820), while technically a lyrical drama also exhibits epic qualities in its scope and ambition.

Verse narratives

Byron's "Don Juan" (1819-1824) exemplifies the Romantic transformation of narrative poetry. Coleridge's "Christabel" (1797-1800), though unfinished, is another significant narrative poem of the period, blending supernatural elements with a medieval setting.

4.2.2 Trends in Prose

Essays

The Romantic period saw a flourishing of the essay form, with writers exploring personal experiences and critical perspectives in innovative ways.

Personal essays

Charles Lamb's "Essays of Elia" (1823) exemplify the Romantic personal essay. Example are: "Dream Children: A Reverie" combines personal memory with imaginative speculation, reflecting on loss and the passage of time. William Hazlitt's "On Going a Journey" (1822) is another notable example, celebrating solitary communion with nature.

Critical essays

William Hazlitt's "On the Living Poets" (1818) demonstrates the Romantic approach to literary criticism. Thomas De Quincey's "On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth" (1823) offers a psychological approach to literary analysis, anticipating later developments in criticism.

Literary Criticism

Romantic writers developed new approaches to literary criticism, emphasizing imagination and emotional response alongside analytical rigor.

Theoretical criticism

Coleridge's "Biographia Literaria" (1817) is a landmark of Romantic literary theory. Percy Bysshe Shelley's "A Defence of Poetry" (1821, published 1840) articulates the Romantic view of poetry as a transformative moral and social force.

Practical criticism

De Quincey's essays on Wordsworth, particularly "On Wordsworth's Poetry" (1845), exemplify

Romantic practical criticism. Hazlitt's "On Shakespeare and Milton" in "Lectures on the English Poets" (1818) offers insightful analyses of earlier writers from a Romantic perspective.

Autobiographies

Romantic writers innovated in the field of autobiography, blending personal experience with literary artistry.

Poetic autobiographies

Wordsworth's "The Prelude" (1799, 1805, and 1850) is the quintessential Romantic poetic autobiography. Coleridge's "Frost at Midnight" (1798), while shorter, also functions as a kind of poetic autobiography, linking personal memory with universal themes.

Prose autobiographies

De Quincey's "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater" (1821) revolutionised autobiographical writing. Leigh Hunt's "Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries" (1828) offers a more conventional but still significant approach to Romantic memoir.

Travel Writing

The Romantic period saw a surge in travel writing, reflecting both increased mobility and a fascination with exotic locales.

Travelogues

Byron's letters from his travels, later collected in works like "Byron's Letters and Journals," offer vivid accounts of his experiences. Mary Wollstonecraft's "Letters Written during a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark" (1796) blends travel observations with personal reflections and social commentary.

Fictional travel narratives

While not strictly a travel narrative, parts of Byron's "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" (1812-1818) function as a fictionalised travelogue. Thomas De Quincey's "The English Mail-Coach" (1849) uses the framework of travel to explore memory, national identity, and the nature of consciousness.

4.2.3 Trends in Novel

Gothic Novels

The Gothic novel, which emerged in the late 18th century, reached its peak during the Romantic period.

Traditional Gothic

Ann Radcliffe's "The Mysteries of Udolpho" (1794) exemplifies the traditional Gothic novel. Matthew Lewis's "The Monk" (1796) offers a more transgressed take on Gothic themes, pushing boundaries with its violence and sexuality.

Psychological Gothic

Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" (1818) marks a shift towards psychological Gothic. Jane Austen's parody "Northanger Abbey" (written 1798-1799, published 1818) both critiques and pays homage to Gothic conventions.

Historical Novels

The historical novel emerged as a distinct genre during the Romantic period, largely through the work of Sir Walter Scott.

Chivalric romances

Scott's "Ivanhoe" (1819) exemplifies the Romantic fascination with medieval chivalry. James Fenimore Cooper's "The Last of the Mohicans" (1826) applies similar techniques to an American frontier setting.

National Tales

Scott's "Waverley" (1814) established many conventions of the historical novel. Maria Edgeworth's "Castle Rackrent" (1800) is an important precursor, using the framework of an Irish family history to explore national character.

Domestic Novels

The domestic novel, focusing on everyday life and manners, reached new heights of sophistication during the Romantic period.

Comedy of manners

Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice" (1813) is a classic of the genre. Frances Burney's "Evelina" (1778), while pre-Romantic, influenced the development of the comedy of manners in this period.

Social Novels

Austen's "Mansfield Park" (1814) shows a more serious engagement with social issues. Mary Brunton's "Self-Control" (1811) offers another example of the Romantic-era novel's engagement with questions of morality and self-improvement.

Bildungsroman

The bildungsroman, or coming-of-age novel, emerged as a distinct genre during this period.

Male Bildungsroman

While Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship" (1795-96) is German, it heavily influenced English Romantic writers. Charles Dickens's early works, such as "David Copperfield" (1849-50), while late Romantic/early Victorian, show the continuing development of this form.

Female Bildungsroman

Jane Austen's "Emma" (1815) can be read as a female bildungsroman. Charlotte Brontë's "Jane Eyre" (1847), while usually classified as a Victorian novel, has strong Romantic elements and further develops the female bildungsroman.

Epistolary Novels

While the heyday of the epistolary novel was earlier, the form continued to evolve during the Romantic period.

Traditional form

Fanny Burney's "Evelina" (1778), while pre-Romantic, influenced later writers.

Romantic adaptations

Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" (1818) uses a complex epistolary framework. Lady Caroline Lamb's "Glenarvon" (1816) uses letters alongside conventional narrative, blending the epistolary form with the Gothic and the roman à clef.

4.2.4 Trends in Drama

Poetic Drama

Romantic poets attempted to revitalise poetic drama, though with limited stage success.

Closet dramas

Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound" (1820) exemplifies the Romantic closet drama. Byron's "Manfred" (1817) is another key example, exploring themes of guilt, defiance, and the supernatural.

Verse Drama

Coleridge's "Remorse" (1813) was one of the few Romantic verse dramas to achieve stage success. Joanna Baillie's plays, such as "De Monfort" (1798), represent another attempt to create a new form of tragic drama centered on the exploration of a single passion.

Gothic Drama

Gothic elements were popular on the Romantic stage, often in melodramatic form.

Melodramatic Gothic

Matthew Lewis's "The Castle Spectre" (1797) was a huge popular success.

Psychological Gothic

Charles Maturin's "Bertram" (1816) represents a more psychologically complex approach.

Historical Drama

The Romantic interest in history extended to the stage, often blending historical settings with contemporary concerns.

Shakespearean-inspired histories

Byron's "Sardanapalus" (1821) exemplifies the Romantic approach to historical drama. Percy Bysshe Shelley's "The Cenci" (1819), while not strictly a history play, uses a historical Italian setting for its exploration of power, corruption, and revenge.

Melodrama

Melodrama became increasingly popular during the Romantic period, often incorporating elements from Gothic and historical drama.

Sentimental Melodrama

Thomas Holcroft's "A Tale of Mystery" (1802) is considered the first English melodrama.

Gothic Melodrama

James Planché's "The Vampire" (1820) combines Gothic elements with melodramatic structure.

Cross-Genre and Experimental Forms

Prose Poetry

The Romantic period saw early experiments in blurring the boundaries between prose and poetry.

Poetic prose

Thomas De Quincey's dream sequences in "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater" (1821) exemplify this trend. William Wordsworth's Preface to "Lyrical Ballads" (1800), while primarily an essay contains passages of highly poetic prose that embody his theories about poetic language.

Fragments

The fragment became an important form in Romantic literature, valued for its suggestiveness and open-endedness.

Poetic fragments

Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" (1816) is perhaps the most famous Romantic fragment. Percy Bysshe Shelley's "The Triumph of Life," left unfinished at his death in 1822, is another significant poetic fragment of the period.

Prose fragments

Coleridge's "Christabel" (published in two parts in 1800 and 1816) blurs the lines between poetic and prose fragments. Mary Shelley's unfinished novel "The Fields of Fancy' (later developed into her novella "Mathilda") shows how Romantic writers experimented with fragmentary forms in longer works as well.

Hybrid Forms

Romantic writers often combined elements from different genres and media to create new forms of expression.

Illustrated poetry

William Blake's illuminated books, such as "Songs of Innocence and of Experience" (1794), represent a unique hybrid of poetry and visual art.

Prose-verse mixtures

While technically post-Romantic, George MacDonald's "Phantastes" (1858) shows the continuing development of hybrid forms influenced by Romanticism. Thomas Lovell Beddoes' "Death's Jest-Book" (written 1825-1849, published posthumously in 1850) mixes poetry, drama, and Gothic elements in an unconventional, fragmented form.

4.3 LET'S SUM UP

Throughout this unit we have discussed literary trends and texts that were in vogue during Romantic age. Writers kept writing in old forms of preceding age but with little deviation and innovated some new ones. The Romantic age saw significant innovations across all literary genres. Poetry revived older forms like the ballad and sonnet, developed the conversation poem and there was great experimentation with odes and epics. In prose, emergence of the personal essay, new approaches to literary criticism, and innovations in autobiographical writing saw new trends. Development of the Gothic novel, historical novel, and refinement of the domestic novel and bildungsroman expanded the scope of this literary genre. Drama experimented with poetic drama, though with limited stage success, and the rise of melodrama add some new features to this literary form. This age saw also cross-genre innovations like, prose poetry, appreciation of literary fragments, and creation of multimedia works. These romantic experiments laid the groundwork for many later literary developments.

4.4 QUESTIONS

- Make a short note on literary trends in poetry during the Romantic age.
- What are the features of personal lyrics?
- Illustrate Horatian and Pindaric odes.
- What is a Pastoral Elegy?

- What are the qualities of a personal essay?
- What is a Poetic Autobiography?
- What is a Travelogue?
- Write a short not on Chivalric Romance.
- Comment on Epistolary Novel.
- Write a note on Closet Drama.

4.5 Further Readings

- M.H. Abrams' A Handbook of Literary Terms.
- Glimpses, Trends in Literatures in English edited by Datta G. Sawant.
- R.D Trivedi's A Compendious History of English Literature.
- Literary Forms, Trends and Movements by Dr. Raghukul Tilak.
- A Book on English Literary Trends by Konda Murali.
- A Companion to Literary Forms by Padmaja Ashok.
- History of English Literature by Edward Albert.
- History of English Literature by William J. Long.
- A Short History of English Literature by Ifor Evans.
- Jashodhara Bagchi (Ed): Literature, Society and Ideology in the Victorian Era.
- A.C. Baugh, Literary History of England, Volume IV.

INTRODUCTION TO BLOCK II

This block is dedicated to the study of Victorian Age in literature. It explores the new horizon of literature during Victorian age. It was a period of transition or change. Change was coming over the life and times of England. Society was slowly changing itself and there was new life being breathed into the thought process of the times. The French revolution, scientific development and industrial revolution were the key factors for transforming the society to a great extent. This block also is structured into four units.

Unit – 5 discusses the socio-political and cultural background of the Victorian age. The Victorian age can be described as the age of peace and material prosperity. During this period, England witnessed the Industrial Revolution which increased the national wealth manifold. It saw the rise of Utilitarianism which viewed from one perspective came to be increasingly recognized as an extreme reaction against Romanticism.

Unit – 6 deals with major Victorian poets of the early and later phase. It was an age of immense and variegated and often self-critical literary activity. The nature of the whole literary activity in the Victorian period can be described in one phrase as the quest for equilibrium or search for balance. The key note of the era is a profound call for rationality in all things. It is clear that the literary phase now in its essential character is allied to that against which Romanticism previously rebelled. It is neo classical in principle because once again the desire for truth is taking first place among the motives of creation. Realism as one of the means of expression is given a greater latitude and the claims of a careful style are more often emphasized. Whatever may be the defects of the Victorian way of life, it cannot be denied that it was in many ways a glorious epoch in the history of English literature, and the advancement made in the field of poetry, prose, and fiction was really commendable.

Unit – 7 is devoted to the study of major Victorian novelists. In the early Victorian period the novel made a rapid progress. Novel-reading was one of the chief occupations of the educated public, and material had to be found for every taste. The result was that the scope of the novel, which during the eighteenth century dealt mainly with contemporary life and manners, was considerably enlarged. A number of brilliant novelists showed that it was possible to adapt the novel to almost all purposes of literature whatsoever. We need hardly go outside the sphere of fiction. The novels produced during the period took various shapes—sermons, political pamphlets, philosophical discourses, social essays, autobiographies and poems in prose. The theatre which could rival fiction had fallen on evil days, and it did not revive till the later half of the nineteenth century. So the early Victorian period saw the heyday of the English novel.

Unit – 8 provides a detailed analysis to the important literary trends and texts of the Victorian era. Though the age saw the dominance of the novel as a literary form there exists also other forms of literature as poetry, drama, short story, science fiction, romances, children's literature and many more. Writers of the period tried their hands on every form of literature making Victorian literature vast and magnificent than the preceding age.

UNIT- 5 VICTORIAN AGE – SOCIO-POLITICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Structure

5.0 Objectives

The objectives of this unit are to:

- Enable learners to analyse the Victorian Age in general along with its background.
- Understand the term Victorian Compromise.
- Understand the social, political and cultural impact of Victorian Age.
- Analyse various features of the Victorian Age apart from its beginning.

5.1 Introduction

The second half of the 19th century is commonly known as the Victorian Age (1837-1901). It was so named because Queen Victoria was on the throne of England then. The Queen came to the throne in 1837 and died in 1901. After her, it came to be known as the Victorian Age. But in literary history 1832 is the year of a great reform. Though the Romantic Age in the real sense of the term ended in 1820, the Victorian Age started from 1832 with the passing of the first Reform Act, 1832. The years 1820-1832 were the years of suspended animation in politics. The Reform Act of 1832 laid down the foundation of political democracy in Britain. Thus the year 1832 is considered to be the beginning of a new age in English society and literature. The Victorian Age was a period of transition or change. Changes were noticed in every sphere of life in England. Society was changing itself so quickly that its best men of letters made a sincere search for balance between the old and the new values of life and faith.

5.2 The Victorian Age (1837 – 1901)

5.2.1 Socio-Cultural Background

Many sweeping changes were taking place in the society of the Victorian Age. The Reform Act of 1832 transferred political power from the upper to the lower middle classes. The result was a great rise of the middle classes in education, politics, and literature. New scientific discoveries shook educated people's faith in religion, and set up the rule of Reason. The industrial revolution, by virtue of the use of machines, created industrialists. It also destroyed old agrarian set-up by making industrialists richer than farmers and peasants. The expansion of the British Empire and the growth of colonization brought wealth and uneasiness to Britain. Psychological forces like realism, reason, the doctrine of utility and reactions against injustice of any kind whatever– all these forces jostled one another in the minds of men and woman.

The Victorian Era is one of the most glorious epochs in the history of England. Historically speaking, it opened in the warmth of June 1837 when Queen Victoria ascended the throne of England, and it closed in the cold of January 1901 when the Queen passed away. It covers the 64-year reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901). It is one of the longest reigns in the history of England. In the year 1837, Queen Victoria succeeded William the IV on the throne of Great Britain and Ireland. The period is marked by many important social and historical changes that altered the nation in many ways. The population got nearly doubled and the British Empire expanded. The period saw the British Empire's growth to become the first global industrial power, producing much of the world's coal, iron, steel and textiles. The period is known for economic progress, poverty and exploitation. The gap between the rich and the poor grew wide and with drive for material and commercial success there appeared a kind of moral decay in the society. The Victorian era saw a wild growth of industries and factories. One very important factor of the age was its stress on morality. A feminine code of conduct was imposed on women which described every aspect of their being from the proper apparels to how to converse, everything had rules. The role of the women was mostly that of being angels of the house and restricted

to domestic confines. They were financially dependent on their husbands and fathers and it led to a commercialisation of the institution of marriage. It was a fact that England was fast turning from an agricultural into a manufacturing country, but it was only after the reform of the Constitution which gave right of vote to the new manufacturing centers, and gave power to the middle classes, that the way was opened for new experiments in constructive politics. Under the reign of Queen Victoria England grew in material prosperity and made amazing advances in industrial and scientific development. By gaining control of India, of the Suez Canal, and of large portions of Africa, England became a world empire. The rapidly increasing industrialisation of England was the main economic fact of the Victorian Era. In 1851 the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations organised by Prince Albert and a group of economic and political leaders was held in the Crystal Palace. It was to display to the world the fruits of the industrial progress that could be attained through the free trade resulting in the Repeal of Corn Laws in 1846 (although the Agitation started with the year 1838).

There were a number of thinkers who were well satisfied with the progress made by the Victorians, while from a whole class of adverse critics could be heard a scathing criticism of the values held dear by the Victorians. While Macaulay trumpeted the progress that the Victorians had achieved, Ruskin and Carlyle, Lytton Strachey and Trollope raised frowns of disfavour against the soul killing materialism of the age. Carlyle, himself a hostile critic of the age, admired L. H. Myer's reference to 'the deep-seated spiritual vulgarity that lies at the heart of our civilisation.' Symonds detected in the Victorian period, whatever may be its buoyancy and promise, elements of 'world fatigue', which were quite alien to the Elizabethan age, with which the Victorian era is often compared. Whatever may be the defects of the Victorian way of life, it cannot be denied that it was in many ways a glorious epoch in the history of English literature, and the advancement made in the field of poetry, prose, and fiction was really commendable.

The Victorian age was essentially a period of peace and prosperity for England. The few colonial wars that broke out during this period exercised little adverse effect on the national life. The Crimean War, of course, caused a stir in England, but its effects were soon forgotten and the people regained the normal tenor of their lives without feeling the aftermaths of war in their round of daily activities. In the earlier years of the age, the effect of the French Revolution was still felt, but by the middle of the century, it had almost complete dwindled and England felt safe from any revolutionary upsurge disturbing the placidity and peaceful reign when Englishmen, secure in their island base, could complete the transformation of all aspects of their industrial, commercial and social life without any risks of violent interruptions that gave quite a different quality to the history of continental nations.

5.2.2 Industrial Revolution

The most tumultuous event that brought a transformation in the Victorian Era is the Industrial Revolution. According to Suroopa Mukherjee: 'If there was a single social phenomenon that fascinated the Victorians, it was the Industrial Revolution. As a social movement it was essentially economic. It drew away men away from the land by opening out new and exciting career options.' The Victorian Period saw the gradual shift from feudal, agrarian economy to a democratic, commercial and urban economy based on manufacture, international trade and business. The era witnessed the peak of Industrial Revolution. As a consequence of the industrialisation, Great Britain became the hotbed of commerce, with plethora of workshops and factories. After 1870, it became the world's banker. The industrialisation lead to the invention of fast railways and ships, established a more improved postal system, made the telephonic communication easily possible; thereby making it possible for the country to reach globally. The workshops and factories employed many labourers, thus leading to social climbing, the peasants becoming industrial workers. Apparently it brought happiness and wealth, but simultaneously it lead to constant fear of inability to keep pace with the

progressive change and competitiveness to cling to the hard-earned status. Dichotomy between the will to keep pace with the rapid changes and the desire to cling to moral standards, gave way to the Victorian dilemma. While ostensibly the era shone with national success, underneath it cried with labour exploitation. The replacement of manpower— that was a prerequisite in cultivation— by machines, resulted in dismissal of many workers and hence unemployment loomed large in the Victorian England. Due to the rapid industrialisation and possibility of lucrative jobs, there was an odyssey of people into the island which led to overpopulation very soon. When the Queen came to the throne the population of London was about two million inhabitants, and during her death in 1901, the population was about six million. The industrialisation and the intensification of the need of working classes gave rise to the significant political movement Chartism. From 1837 to 1848 there grew activities of the Chartists, a body of political reformers, chiefly of the working classes, who made certain demands expressed in "Six Points" of "The People's Charter'- namely, universal adult male suffrage (granted by Acts of 1867, 1884, 1918), extended to women (1928), vote by ballot (granted 1872), annual parliaments, payment of members (granted 1911), abolition of the property qualification for members of Parliament (granted 1958), and equal electoral districts.

Industrial advancement created social unrest and economic distress among the masses. The Industrial Revolution while creating the privileged class of capitalists and mill-owners, rolling in wealth and riches, also brought in its wake the semi-starved and ill-clad class of labourers and factory workers who were thoroughly dissatisfied with their miserable lot. Even long before the machine age had actually been ushered in, we find Carlyle writing in his *Signs of the Times* (1829): "Were we required to characterise this age of ours by any single epithet, we should be tempted to call it, not an Heroical, Devotional, Philosophical or Moral age, but, above all others, the Mechanical Age. It is the age of Machinery, in every outward and inward sense of that word; the age which, with its whole undivided might, forwards, teaches and practises the great art of adapting means to evils. Not the external and physical alone is now managed by machinery, but the spiritual also. Men are grown mechanical in head and heart, as well as in hand". National wealth was increased but it was not equitably distributed. A new class of landed aristocracy and mill owners sprang up and they looked with eyes of disdain and withering contempt on the lot of the ragged and miserable factory hands. Conditions of life held no charm for labourers and workers in the field; for they were required to dwell in slum areas with no amenities of life attending them at any stage of their miserable existence. There were scenes of horrid despair witnessed in the lives of the poor. With the whirlgig of time a wave of social unrest swept over England, and the ulcers of this apparently opulent society were brought to the surface by writers like Dickens, Ruskin, and Carlyle. "The deplorable state of the debtor's Prison, the Fleet, and the Marshalsea; the dismal abysses of elementary education; the sorry type of nurses available in sickness; the oppression of little children: the prevalence of religious hypocrisy – these and many other dark corners in the life of England were illuminated by the searchlight of Dickens' genius."

The woeful and deplorable conditions of labourers, miners, debtors, prisoners soon caught the eyes of social reformers, and a stage was prepared for ameliorating the lot of the down-trodden and under dogs of an affluent society. This paved the way to many social reforms and in turn there came prison reforms. Till now old, young hardened and new criminals were all dumped together. But the tireless work of reformers like Mrs. Fry and others changed the scene. The place was transformed and separating criminals tamed them. Humanitarian reforms were urged by the reformers – hanging in chains was abolished and so was the death sentence for minor crimes. Capital punishment was reserved for murder only. Much had been done and much remained to be done. But the first steps had been taken to humanise and reform society. The Victorian era, therefore, witnessed vigorous social reforms and a line of crusading humanitarian reformers who sought to do away with the festering sores and seething maladies of the Victorian age. The Victorian age is, therefore, an age of humanitarian

considerations and social uplift for the masses.

5.2.3 The New Scientific Developments

The Victorian age was also a period of great intellectual stir caused by scientific researches. The eminent British physicist Michael Faraday (1791-1867) carried out experimental researches in Electricity more vigorously from 1839 to 1855. The opening of the first electric street-railway at Baltimore was done in 1886. In 1898 the first wireless communication was established across the British Channel. Of the advance in scientific knowledge, a special mention should be made of the evolutionary hypothesis that found expression throughout the Victorian era. It was anticipated by the geologist Charles Lyell (1797-1875) who came forward with his three books-*The Principles of Geology* (1830-33), *The Elements of Geology* (1838) and *The Geological Evidence of the Antiquity of Man* (1863). His conclusions about the mortality of species, and so of man, and the feeling that the indifference of Nature might mean the indifference of God, were deeply disturbing concepts. Robert Chambers' (1802-1871) *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (1844) further exemplified and advanced the theory of evolution. But the greatest shock to the Victorian sensibilities was Charles Darwin's (1809-1882) two chief scientific writings *On the Origin of Species by Natural Selection* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871). These publications profoundly affected the thoughts of the intelligentsia and shook them to their very foundations. Darwin's theories challenged the biblical version of the creation and damaged people's faith in Christianity considerably. The anthropologist Sir James G. Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890), and the famous Austrian psychologist Sigmund Freud's (1855-1939) *The Study of Hysteria* (1895), particularly, moved rapidly into the public domain and placed their ideology at a critical juncture. Consequently, there arose in the minds of sensitive men a conflict between religion and science, between the traditional faith and the incoming inquisitive scientific spirit. The Victorian man was in a fix whether to bid good-bye to the age-old religious belief of the *Bible* and be bold enough to welcome the new scientific spirit of enquiry or to stick to the biblical faith and remain outdated rejecting outright the new fashion of rational modernism. The Victorian temper characterised a man as:

> "Wandering between two worlds, one dead
> The other powerless to be born
> With nowhere yet to rest his head."

5.2.4 Religious Scenario

Victorian England was extremely religious. Families during this time period were usually large, hard-working, respectable, and were taught religion at home. They were frequent church goers and read the *Bible* regularly. While church attendance during this era contributed to a family's social standing, the lower middle and upper working class felt left out because they were not socially accepted at churches with the upper class citizens who formed the Anglican Church or Church of England. To profess to be Roman Catholic during this era was to proclaim that you were poor and low class. You "were excluded from political office and suffered other penalties". This caused the two lower classes of citizens to form the Methodist and Nonconformist churches that are still prominent in today's society. Although Nonconformists and Anglicanism was always an option in religion, many people became Methodists when they left home and branched out on their own. These new churches were run by Evangelicals and middle-class philanthropists. They attracted the working-class who were taught to read the Bible, and gave them the opportunity to socialise with the opposite sex, which was largely unheard of at this time. Although the churches were fuller than before, most middle and working-class people still felt that they were not welcome; therefore, attending church could bring them attention they did not want because they did not have the money to give the church like the upper class did. Many people today still do not attend church for this same reason. Certain churches are still

considered for the "wealthy only" and those with a poorer background do not feel that they would be welcome. Religion was considered a middle-class proprietary or luxury, although most were still married in a church and children were still christened there. During this time, churches began programmes to provide food, clothing, shelter, monetary assistance, and a copy of their own Bible in an attempt to help the working class and to raise them above their situation. This is equivalent to the programmes now run by, not only churches in this area, but Agape, Good Samaritan and the Jesus Community Centre which provides food, shelter, clothing, and financial assistance to the working poor in Logan County. The down-side to this was the fact that the working poor began to learn how to "work the system" to their advantage because they felt that they were owed what the churches gave to them.

5.2.5 Position of Women

Many of the historical changes that characterised the Victorian period motivated discussion and argument about the nature and role of woman — what the Victorians called "The Woman Question." The extension of the franchise by the Reform Bills of 1832 and 1867 stimulated discussion of women's political rights. Although women in England did not get the right to vote until 1918, petitions to Parliament advocating women's suffrage were introduced as early as the 1840s. Equally important was the agitation to allow married women to own and handle their own property, which culminated in the passing of the Married Women's Property Acts (1870–1908). The Industrial Revolution resulted in changes for women as well. The explosive growth of the textile industries brought hundreds of thousands of lower class women into factory jobs with grueling working conditions. The new kinds of labour and poverty that arose with the Industrial Revolution presented a challenge to traditional ideas of woman's place. Middle-class voices also challenged conventional ideas about women. In *A Woman's Thoughts About Women*, the novelist Dinah Maria Mulock compares the prospects of Tom, Dick, and Harry, who leave school and plunge into life, with those of "the girls," who "likewise finish their education, come home, and stay at home." They have, she laments, "literally nothing to do." Likewise in *Cassandra*, Florence Nightingale, who later became famous for organising a contingent of nurses to take care of sick and wounded soldiers during the Crimean War, writes passionately of the costs for women of having no outlet for their heroic aspirations. Popular representations of Florence Nightingale, "The Lady with the Lamp," reflect the paradox of her achievement. While her organisation of nurses was an important advance in hospital treatment, the image of her tending the wounded seems to reflect a traditional view of woman's mission. Even Queen Victoria herself represents a similar paradox. Though she was queen of the British Empire, paintings and photographs of her, such as Winterhalter's The Royal Family in 1846, represent her identity in conventional feminine postures and relationships. Journalist Henry Mayhew's interviews with a seamstress and a fruit seller vividly portray the difficulties of their lives. In *Of Queen's Gardens,* John Ruskin celebrates the "true wife," and Elizabeth Eastlake's "Lady Travellers" proposes her as a national ideal, while in *The Girl of the Period*, Eliza Lynn Linton satirises the modern woman. In contrast, two fictional characters, Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* and George Gissing's *Miss Barefoot*, from The Odd Women, speak passionately of the wish that their existence be "quickened with all of incident, life, fire, and feeling." All of these texts show how complex the debate was on what the Victorians called "The Woman Question."

5.2.6 Educational Scenario

Several laws were passed for the betterment of education. Forster's Education Act of 1870 set up new boarding schools, University Test Act of 1871 said that the entry to Oxford and Cambridge would be open to all on the basis of merit and not limited to the members of the Anglican Church. Mundella's Elementary Education Act (1881) stated free and compulsory education of children from five to ten years. Education at this time varied greatly between both social classes and genders. In the

upper class, when children were quite young, they were raised by a governess. After they reached the age of about ten, children would usually go to a public school. Public schools were selective and expensive institutions. The first of these types of schools was Winchester College, which was founded in 1382. Boys in the upper class had the best opportunities for a good education. This idea is evident through the fact that private schools were male-only and they cost money to attend, so poor families could not afford to send their children there. Public schools were essentially used to prepare boys to be gentlemen. There was not a strong emphasis on scholastics. Instead, the education at these schools was heavily focused on sportsmanship, religion, leadership, and even confidence, so the boys would have all of the necessary skills to eventually be legitimate members of the elite class in society. Upper class girls, on the other hand, were not sent to public schools. They stayed at home and learned skills that would benefit them when they got married, because this was the most common path for women in Victorian England to take. It was imperative that girls knew how to sew, cook, sing, and play an instrument. These were all skills that could be used during a girl's life, especially to help her husband or make him proud. Eventually, women's colleges began to open and females had more opportunities for education as they got older.

5.2.6.1 Ragged and Dame Schools

"Ragged Schools" were set up to provide free basic education to orphans and very poor children. Ragged schools were developed in idea by John Pounds, a Portsmith shoemaker. In 1818, Pounds began teaching without charging fees so that poor children could also learn. Thomas Guthrie helped promote Pound's idea of free schooling for working class children. Guthrie also started a ragged school in Edinburgh and Sheriff Watson started another in Aberdeen. These schools spread rapidly and there were 350 ragged schools by the time the 1870 Education Act was passed. The ragged schools were often run by churches and had a foundation of charity and religion. They were free to attend and many of the people that taught were actually volunteers. At ragged schools, kids had some typical school subjects, but they also learned skills such as knitting and gardening. This was done in order to ensure that children had knowledge about certain trades or types of housework that could be used outside of school and later in their lives.

"Dame Schools" were also set up by women who were most likely themselves poor and were more similar to babysitters than teachers. Oftentimes the school was run right out of the woman's home, and it was typical for these children to be given household chores to complete. In fact, some dame schools were run by women who were illiterate; therefore they could not teach these young children much where academics were concerned. They looked after the children more than they taught them, but it was a place where poor parents could ensure their children were out of trouble while they made money for their family. While, "ragged schools" were required to be free, "dame schools" were not; this made them a form of a private school.

In Victorian England, women were believed to only need to be educated in "accomplishments" such as artistic talents (singing and dancing), and the languages, essentially anything that would allow them to earn a husband and become the "Angels of the House". There were many doctors who believed that if women studied too much education, it would stunt their ability to reproduce. Therefore, when universities opened to females, a lot of families did not want to send their daughters for fear no one would want to marry them afterward. However, as time went on and more and more women's colleges opened, more intelligent women attended to be educated in things other than "fashionable" subjects. It was not until more than forty years after the Victorian Era began that the Education Act was passed in England in 1870, making it required that both females and males get an elementary education, while secondary education in even upper-class families was not a consideration for females until the 1890s. Female teachers were permitted, however they had a much lower wage than male teachers and were required to choose either having a profession or marriage and therefore all female teachers were

required to remain unmarried while male teachers were not.

Oxford and Cambridge were the ancient universities, and had three requirements to attend: You had to be male, be unmarried, and be a member of the Church of England. Later, small colleges began to form, grouped as London University in 1836. As time went on and more men became interested in furthering their education, more universities such as Durham and Birmingham were founded. At university, much more was expected of the students than what learning they had acquired in primary and secondary school: "Instead of passively acquiring established knowledge, students were expected to learn how to do original research, helped by the new institution of the research seminar". University also served as a ground for men to make friends and important connections to further them in their future status as a gentleman.

5.2.7 Political Scenario

Compared to France, the ancient enemy, Victorian Britain was politically conservative. Few things united the English middle and upper classes more than their hatred of revolutionary violence and upheaval. And unlike its European rivals, Britain managed to reform its political system without a revolution. In the course of Victoria's reign the Reform Acts of 1867 and 1884 increased the number of adult men entitled to vote from about one-sixth to two-thirds, although there were as yet no votes for women. The new queen had a tendency towards favouritism in her politics, preferring 'Uncle Melbourne' (her first prime minister) and the Whigs to the rival Tories. After her marriage in 1840, however, Prince Albert tempered the queen's partisanship. Their twin desks at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight vividly express both their personal partnership and the important place that the Crown still occupied in public life. Melbourne's replacement, Sir Robert Peel, was a Tory, but also the son of a northern manufacturer. He embodied the broadening social background of the Tories, and their acceptance of the need for (conservative) reform. The process of reform was rudely interrupted, however, by a great division on the principle of free trade versus protectionism, crystallised in Peel's repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, which allowed more cheap imported grain into Britain. Peel split his party on a matter of principle, and ushered in almost 30 years of Whig-Liberal dominance. In many ways the tone and composition of government remained heavily aristocratic for much of the reign. Queen Victoria's prime ministers included four earls, a marquess, a viscount and the younger son of an earl. The House of Lords was as important as the Commons, and a major part of political life was played out in grand London drawing rooms and at country-house weekends. A new politics was taking shape, however, springing up in the manufacturing cities of the midlands and north. In response, from the late 1850s onwards Whiggism morphed into Liberalism. This was personified by Liverpool-born William Gladstone, who joined the Liberals in 1859.

In the 1860s the Conservatives recovered thanks to the inspired leadership of Benjamin Disraeli, and his ability to persuade his party to countenance further parliamentary reform. The tussle for power between Disraeli and Gladstone, the two great politicians of the age, saw the appearance of modern two-party politics in a recognisable form, and their regular jousts at the dispatch box continued until Disraeli's defeat in 1880. By then, parliamentary government was at the height of its prestige. In 1886 the issue of Irish home rule, championed by Gladstone, split the Liberals, allowing the Conservatives to dominate as the 19th century drew to an end. The election of James Keir Hardie, first MP for the Labour Representation Committee (precursor of the Labour Party), in 1900, presaged the decline of liberalism and the politics of a new age.

The formal political system was a constitutional monarchy. It was in practice dominated by aristocratic men. The British constitution was (and is) unwritten and consists of a combination of written laws and unwritten conventions. At the national level, government consisted of the monarch and the two houses of Parliament, the House of Lords and the House of Commons. The monarchs during this period were Queen Victoria (1837–1901), preceded by King George IV (1820–30)

and King William IV (1830–37) and followed by King Edward VII (1901–10) and King George V (1910–36). During the Victorian period, the House of Commons became the centre of government, the House of Lords lost power (though it remained influential until the Parliament Act of 1911), and the monarchy transformed into a symbol of the nation. The House of Commons consisted of about 600 men called members of Parliament (MPs), who were elected to represent the counties and boroughs of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. England had many more representatives than the other three nations, by virtue of its status as first among these four equals, the product of tradition as well as its greater political power and wealth. The upper house, the House of Lords, was populated principally by several hundred noblemen who had life tenures. Members of both houses were wealthy men. Formal national politics was dominated by two major parties, the Liberal Party and the Conservative (or Tory) Party.

At the start of the period, MPs were elected by the half-million property-owning men (in a population of 21 million) who had the vote. In 1829 the vote was granted to Catholic men and in 1832, to most middle-class men; in 1867 and 1884 the franchise was extended to working-class men. Most women over age 30 got the right to vote in 1918. Full adult suffrage, with no property requirement, was achieved with the second Representation of the People Act (1928). This story of the expansion of the national electorate is important, but there is more to political participation than voting at the national level. Local politics were also important. And being denied a voice and access to institutions certainly did not render nonvoters indifferent to politics or to how power was wielded; they made their opinions on these known via demonstrations, petitions, and pamphlets. Important political events during this period included the abolition of slavery in the British Empire; the expansions of the franchise; working-class political activism, most notably Chartism; the rise of liberalism as the dominant political ideology, especially of the middle class; and the nationalization of Conservative and Liberal parties (and the emergence of the British Labour Party in 1906). The growth of the state and state intervention were seen in major acts that limited hours for factory workers and miners, in public health acts, and in the provision of elementary education by the state. Political conflicts between Ireland and Britain and the rise of Irish nationalism were also hallmarks of the era, as were women's rights activism, which resulted in the Married Women's Property Acts, the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts, and the growth of education and employment options for women.

5.3 LITERARY FEATURES OF THE AGE

Although during the Victorian age every form of literature abounded, from pure romance to gross realism, struggle for expression, it is emphatically an age of prose. With the spread of popular education, the number of readers increased and the novel which is the pleasantest form of literary entertainment as well as the most successful method of presenting modern problems, came to occupy the same place which drama held in the days of Elizabeth. According to W. J. Long: "...never before, in any age or language, has the novel appeared in such numbers and in such perfection." Almost all the major writers of the age are moralists. The Victorian literature, therefore, both in prose and poetry, seems to depart from the purely artistic standard of art for art's sake, and to be actuated by a definite moral purpose. Tennyson, Browning, Carlyle and Ruskin – all believe in the ideal of art for life's sake and seek to uplift and instruct humanity through their writings. Even the novel breaks away from Scott's romantic influence, and first studies life as it is, and then points out what life may and ought to be. This is precisely why the Victorian Age is an age of realism rather than of Romance. This realism is not akin to the "naturalism" of Zola or Ibsen, but a deeper realism which strives to tell the whole truth, showing moral and physical diseases as they are, but holding up health and hope as the normal conditions of humanity. Though it is somewhat customary to speak of this age as an age of doubt and pessimism lacking in great ideals, spiritual and ethical impulse is markedly dominant in the writers, whether they be poets, novelists, or essayists. "The conspicuous quality of literature between 1830 and

1880 is the quality of nobleness", writers O. Elton, Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, Ruskin, Newman, and Carlyle – all exhibit in their writings nobility of tone and outlook, concern with grave and serious issues of life. The Victorians might have been confused or bewildered, but they certainly tried to fix their gaze on what was noble and beautiful.

If we look at the literature of the Victorian period, we are dazzled by its sheer output. However, the Victorian period, is considered one of literary decline, derivativeness, and disintegration. Though the period is often compared with the Elizabethan age, it lacks the exuberant fancy, thee romantic ardour, the boyish gladness, and the effortless case of the Elizabethans and the Romantics. Almost all critics are agreed on the fact that there is very little in Victorian literature which is comparable with Blake's *Songs of Experience*, Wordsworth's *The Prelude,* Crabbe's *Tales in Verse*, or Byron's *Vision of Judgement*. This is perhaps the clearest indication of some deficiency in the creative works of the period. The reasons for this decline are not far to seek, it seems that the Victorian writers found the inspiration of writing in the more general impression and aims of the age, the "spirit of the age", rather than in the pressures within their own minds. To turn to Victorians after studying the great Romantics is to experience a loosening of tension, a blurring of focus. We are rarely in doubt as to the particular distress or joy which inspires Romantic poetry. Much Victorian poetry depends for its effect on impressiveness of manner and tone, and expresses a melancholy which appears academic rather than personal. Yeats' remark, "We make out of the quarrel with others, rhetoric, but of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry", marks the difference between the literary output of the Victorians and that of the Romantics. In fact, it was not so much an age of scepticism as an age of muddle. G.K. Chesterton in his inimitable style writes, "The Victorians were floundering along to something valiantly, but they were floundering." The bane of much of Victorian writing is its concern with ideas and opinions. Consequently, there was sometimes almost a tragic misdirection of energies. Most of the poets were trying to resolve not only their own inner struggles but the problems alien to them. For example, Tennyson's genius was for the lyric but he tried to interpret his age; Arnold was essentially a meditative poet but he chose to be a lyrical one; Meredith's genius was poetic but he chose to be a novelist. The moral tone and the manner of the pulpit came in conflict with the genuine literary impulse. The writers of the age sought to placate the moral dilemmas of the age at the cost of achieving literary concentration. Even the ideal of decency and restraint in literary expression which came to be increasingly prized by the Victorian writers was not a formal characteristic but a moral imperative. The preoccupation of the Victorians with Darwin's theory of evolution. Mill's Utilitarianism, Herbert Spencer's political, social, and moral theorising, and Ricardo's and Bentham's economic ideas and the intense optimism or pessimism associated with them now seems to date and parochialise their work, whereas much Romantic poetry retains its universality undiminished. Even in Wordsworth's poetry there are moral conflicts but they seem to relate to the fundamental human conditions and existence. The works of the 20th century writers such as Conrad, Eliot, Yeats, Lawrence, and Forster have to be understood as attempts to go beyond Tennyson or Browning or George Eliot and to carry a stage further the great debates about human existence by the Romantics. Since the literature of the period is animated by a moral sense both in its narrow as well as wide implications, the range of permissive moods and subjects is sharply curtailed. While on the other hand, vague emotionalism and impressiveness could enjoy the prestige of significant and profound experience, a general reticence concerning matters of sex is a common characteristic of literature in the Victorian period. "Victorianism", says H.M. Lones, "is the pretence that if you do not name a thing it isn't there". Though a considerable part of Victorian literary output is marred by complacency, smugness, prudery, and parochialism, it would be far more accurate to describe the literature of the age in terms of intellectual expansion, social consciousness, and philosophical conflict. The literature of the period reflects a parochial view of British infallibility and self-righteousness side by side with the rise of science, the growth of liberalism and assimilation of a great deal of foreign culture.

5.4 VICTORIAN COMPROMISE

The term "Victorian Compromise" was first used by G.K. Chesterton in his book *The Victorian Age in literature*. The term refers to the contradictions between the progress brought on by the industrial revolution, and the poverty, disease and suffering felt by the working classes as a result of this progress. While the middle and the upper classes enjoyed advancement in wealth and quality of life, and reaped the benefits of an expanding empire, the working class suffered greatly. Forced to work into close, overcrowded rooms and poor living conditions workers were often at the mercy of their dangerous jobs in textile mills, mines or railways. Mortality rates were high, and child labour was a common killer, along with disease. It was the triumph of capitalism and the birth of Marxism; it was the age of Darwinian science but also the age of Dickensian romance.

The Victorians sought a happy compromise when they were faced with radical problems. They were not willing to be dominated by one extreme viewpoint, and in a welter of confusing issues they struck out a pleasing compromise. Victorian Compromise was particularly perceptible in three branches of life. In the field of political life, there was a compromise between democracy and aristocracy. While accepting the claims of the rising masses to political equality they defended the rights of aristocracy. While reposing their faith in progress in the political sphere, they were not ready for revolutionary upsurges disturbing the settled order of life. Progressive ideals were reconciled with conservative leanings for an established order of society. In the field of religion and science, a satisfying compromise was affected. The advances made by new science were accepted, but the claims of old religion were not ignored. The Victorians took up a compromising position between faith of religion and doubt created by science:

There remains more faith in honest doubt,

Believe me than in half the creeds.

"They desired to be assured that all was for the best; they desired to discover some compromise which, while not outstanding their intellect and their reason, would none the less soothe their conscience and restore their faith, if not completely, at least sufficiently to allow them to believe in some ultimate purpose and more important still, in the life after death. In voicing these doubts, in phrasing the inevitable compromise Tennyson found, and endeavoured passionately to fulfil his appointed mission.

In the field of sex, the Victorians had their compromise. The sex problem was the most blatant and persistent. In this field their object was to discover "some middle course between the unbridled licentiousness of previous ages and the complete negation of the functions and purposes of nature." The Victorians permitted indulgence in sex but restricted its sphere to conjugal felicity and happy married life. They disfavoured physical passion and illegal gratification of sex impulse. They could not contemplate the possibility of any relation between man and woman other than the conjugal. In Tennyson's *Lady of Shalott* we are introduced to 'two young lovers' walking together in the moonlight, but we are at once reassured by the statement that these two lovers were 'lately wed.' The Victorian ideal was to achieve 'wedded bliss' rather than satisfaction of the sex urge by illegal and unauthorised methods.

In the Victorian age, the people were highly conflicted between science and religion. Scientific development conflicted the people in the heart. Especially, Charles Darwin's theory that tells man originated from monkeys. However, religion proclaims that man does not originated from monkeys. Alfred, Lord Tennyson, chief exponent of the Victorian age, says that science should be given a position in its place and religion should be given a position in its place. It means that both science and religion have their own place of importance within this world. The moral purpose in literature, the Bilden Roman consisted in the doctrine of predestination. Authors like Charles Dickens was

supporting the status quo and Oscar Wilde was against the Victorian standards. In the Victorian Age the economic growth of middle classes allowed the birth of this new philosophy, known as the Victorian Compromise. The aim was to save the morality in a material society who lacked of values. New words were: public virtues and private vices, which is the base of Victorian Compromise. The women were forced into unnatural marital roles and considered as a symbol of family values. Thus Victorian Age was a cacophonous clash of contradictions masquerading a compromise.

5.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VICTORIAN ERA

The Victorian Age presents many dissimilar features yet we can have its general features under the following heads:

5.5.1 Utilitarian Outlook

The age was dominated by the Utilitarian Theories – that of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. The Theory of Utilitarianism propounded that the dominant striving factor of an individual's life is to attain as much pleasure as possible – to maximize pleasure and to minimize pain.

5.5.2 An Era of Imperial Might

Great Britain during Victoria's reign was not just a powerful island nation. It was the centre of a global empire that fostered British contact with a wide variety of other cultures, though the exchange was usually an uneven one. By the end of the nineteenth century, nearly one-quarter of the earth's land surface was part of the British Empire, and more than 400 million people were governed by Great Britain, however nominally. An incomplete list of British colonies and quasi-colonies in 1901 would include Australia, British Guiana (now Guyana), Brunei, Canada, Cyprus, Egypt, Gambia, the Gold Coast (Ghana), Hong Kong, British India (now Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka), Ireland, Kenya, Malawi, the Malay States (Malaysia), Malta, Mauritius, New Zealand, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somaliland (Somalia), South Africa, the Sudan, Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), and Trinidad and Tobago. Queen Victoria's far-flung empire was a truly heterogeneous entity, governed by heterogeneous practices. It included Crown Colonies like Jamaica, ruled from Britain, and protectorates like Uganda, which had relinquished only partial sovereignty to Britain. Ireland was a sort of internal colony whose demands for home rule were alternately entertained and discounted. India had started the century under the control of the East India Company, but was directly ruled from Britain after the 1857 Indian Mutiny (the first Indian war of independence), and Victoria was crowned Empress of India in 1877.

5.5.3 The Crisis of Faith

The Victorian Era was one of change and growth, which both helped and hurt society as a whole. The change and growth was seen in railway construction, a boom in factory and industry, a female Queen, scientific discoveries, and higher education for females. These factors showed advancements in several areas, but these advancements brought about many questions and concerns. Children as young as nine were working, instead of going to school, to help support their families, regular churchgoers were beginning to question their faith due to Darwinism, and women were leaving their role as caregiver to pursue an education.

5.5.4 An Era of Globalisation

Railways and steamships connected the empire. People from the colonies could travel to London seeking wealth and education, making for an increasingly diverse city. The first Indian restaurant, the Hindoostanee Coffee House, opened in London in 1810. 10,000 people of African heritage were in England by the turn of the century. Irish and Italian Catholics, along with German and French Protestants, flocked to the city. Jews were allowed back into England by Oliver Cromwell in the 17th

century and have been residents in London ever since. Muslims from the Arab World and East Asia were employed on the ships of the East India Company.

5.5.5 The Railways and Steamships

A defining feature of Victorian England was the rapid expansion of the railways. Trains are taken for granted today but were a revelation in the British Empire. Before the railways, the fastest way to travel was by horse. Just as the Roman Empire built roads wherever they went, the British Empire built railways. Trains allowed for speedy travel throughout the empire and facilitated the expansion of infrastructure in the colonies. London's first rail line, connecting London with Birmingham, was completed in 1838. This was also the year the SS Great Western, the longest steamship in the world at the time, made its maiden voyage from England to New York, completing the journey in under 15 days. The world was becoming smaller.

5.5.6 An Era of Sickening Pollution

The Industrial Revolution brought many detriments as well as benefits. Machines reduced the need for labour in the fields, so people migrated to the cities in droves to find work in factories. For the first time in history, more people lived in the cities than in the countryside. London's population grew from a million people in 1800 to five million in 1900. Squalor intensified. There wasn't enough space to support the burgeoning population. The poor gathered in slums and workhouses. There was no effective plumbing in London until the 1860s, so waste was dumped into the Thames. The stink of the river became so bad that Parliament considered moving out of the city. In a letter to a friend Charles Dickens wrote that "I can certify that the offensive smells, even in that short whiff, have been of a most head-and-stomach-distending nature."

5.5.7 Tainted Food

For the poor, there was a risk of consuming food that had been tampered with. Chalk was mixed with flour, and sweets were laced with chemicals to produce bright colours.

5.5.8 Houses of Lead

Lead was utilised heavily in the construction of housing, so inhabitants were being slowly poisoned. This was an issue even for middle-class homeowners.

5.5.9 Child Labour and Baby Farms

Queen Victoria believed in the importance of education and made it available to all. But many families desperately needed income, so they would have their children work in factories rather than attend schools. Then there were the "baby farms". The Poor Laws of 1834 absolved fathers from any responsibility for illegitimate children. There was no child support here; single mothers had to support their children independently. Many couldn't afford to and left their children at so-called "baby farms". The people running these "farms" would often pocket the adoption fee and then leave the child to starve—or worse.

5.5.10 An Era of Gin

During the Middle Ages, tainted water supplies meant peasants generally preferred beer with their meals, whether for breakfast, lunch or dinner. Inhabitants of Victorian England similarly didn't trust the water supply, despite gradual improvements in plumbing. However, by this time, gin had become the drink of choice, even for the working class who, as Charles Dickens noted, scorned beer in favour of gin.

5.5.11 An Era of Sexual Repression

Victorians had less of an issue talking about death as modern folk but avoided the subject of

sex like the plague. Upper-class women actually considered it a point of pride to know as little about sexual matters, including their own anatomy, as possible. Victorian society refused even to acknowledge that women had sexual desire, believing that to be a solely masculine pursuit. It was held that women only engaged in sex to please their husbands.

5.5.12 An Era of Music Halls

Theatre was a sophisticated pursuit reserved for the upper classes. For the rest of society, the vibrant music hall provided an escape from the filth and poverty of the city. Singers, acrobats and other performers were on-hand to entertain the jovial (and often intoxicated) crowds. The upper class considered these venues vulgar, with their smoky interiors and noisy crowds, but the lower classes were completely immersed in the experience. Except for when the performance was poor, in which case the audience would pelt the stage with rotten vegetables. Thankfully, someone was usually stationed on the edge of the stage to drag such performers off with a large hook. The largest music halls, such as the Canterbury Music Hall, were fitted with glittering chandeliers, grand staircases and art galleries. An experience any poor Victorian child was sure to treasure.

5.6 LET'S SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed so far the accession of Queen Victoria and her way to reign, problems of her reign, societal condition, condition of labour class men, women and children, condition of education, position of women in the society, condition of literature and key features of the Age. The Victorian Era was one of the most contradictory period in English Literature. It was marked by several contradictory tendencies. It was an era of material affluence and of great poverty and misery. It was a period of expanding empire and wealth and on the other hand an era of starvation for needy and poor. "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times…" as Dickens wrote.

5.7 QUESTIONS

- Analyse the historical significance of the Victorian period.
- How did the enforcement and abolition of various legislative reforms cumulatively lead to the constant change in the Victorian England?
- Reflect on the Scientific Temperament of the Victorian Age
- What was the effect of industrialisation on Victorian social set up?
- Write a note on the position of women in Victorian England.
- Write a note on the Religion and its complexities in the Victorian Period.
- Write a short note on Chartism.
- What is the basic philosophy of Utilitarianism?
- Analyse the advent of capitalism in Britain and its impact on the lives of people.

5.8 FURTHER READINGS

- Michael Alexander, "A History of English Literature".
- Jashodhara Bagchi (Ed): Literature, Society and Ideology in the Victorian Era.
- A.C. Baugh, Literary History of England, Volume IV.
- G.M. Young, "Victorian England: Portrait of an Age".
- www.victorianweb.org/history/legistl/html

- www.britannica.com
- www.jstor.org
- A Short History of English Literature by Ifor Evans.
- Critical Approaches to Literature by David Daiches.
- Social and Literary History of England by J.N. Mundra & S.C. Mundra.
- The Norton Anthology of English Literature. Volume I, by W.W. Norton & Company.

UNIT-6 MAJOR VICTORIAN POETS: EARLY AND LATER

Structure

6.0 OBJECTIVES

After completing this unit the learners will be able to:

- Know about two groups of Victorian poets, viz. early and later.
- Poetic creations of major poets.
- Understand the nature of poetry during the Victorian Age.
- Analyse if Victorian poetry was different from Romantic poetry or continuation of Romantic poetry.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

After the romantic revival, the literature of the Victorian age entered in a new period. The Literature of this period expressed the fusion of Romanticism to Realism. The Victorian age is rich in literature. It produced two great poets like Tennyson and Browning; dramatists like Shaw and Galsworthy; novelists like Charles Dickens and Hardy; and essayist like Carlyle and Stevenson. The age is remarkable for the excellence of its literature. The Victorian Age is so long and complicated and the great writers who flourished in it are so many, that for the sake of convenience it is often divided into two periods—Early Victorian Period and Later Victorian Period. The earlier period extended from 1832 to 1870. The great writers of this period were Tennyson, Browning, Matthew Arnold, Carlyle, Ruskin, Dickens and Thackeray. All these poets, novelists and prose-writers form, a certain homogenous group, because in spite of individual differences they exhibit the same approach to the contemporary problems and the same literary, moral and social values. But the later Victorian writers who came into prominence after 1870—Rossetti, Swinburne, Morris, George Eliot, Meredith, Hardy, Newman and Pater seem to belong to a different age. In poetry Rossetti, Swinburne and Morris were the protagonists of new movement called the Pre-Raphaelite Movement, which was followed by the Aesthetic Movement.

6.2 EARLY VICTORIAN POETS

The poetry of the Victorian era was a continuation of romanticism. It has beauty and variety enough, but is less inspiring than the poetry of the preceding age. The Victorian poets reveal an extraordinary degree of self-awareness and Tennyson's In M*emoriam* truly presents the full process of the breakdown of the value-structure – disorientation, incertitude and alienation that follow, and the ultimate establishment of a new basis for affirmation. Alfred Tennyson, Robert Browning and Matthew Arnold belonged to the earlier phase of the Victorian Age, although with them were some minor poets like Arthur Clough and Coventry Patmore. In the latter phase, there was another group of poets who in their thoughts and poetic nuances differed from the earlier ones, like Thomas Hardy, G.M. Hopkins and A.C Swinburne. Ample contribution was from the women poets too, like Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Christina Rossetti and the Bronte sisters.

6.2.1 Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809 - 1892)

Tennyson was the most representative poet of the Victorian era born on 6 August 1809 in Somersby, Lincolnshire, England. He was born into a successful middle-class family of minor landowning status. His father, George Clayton Tennyson was an Anglican clergyman who served as rector of Somersby. Alfred Tennyson's mother was Elizabeth. Tennyson was the fourth of 12 children. Alfred, with two of his brothers, Frederick and Charles, was sent in 1815 to Louth grammar school – where he was unhappy. He left in 1820, but, though home conditions were difficult, his father managed to give him a wide literary education. Alfred was precocious, and before his teens he had composed in the styles of Alexander Pope, Sir Walter Scott, and John Milton. To his youth also belongs *The Devil and the Lady* (a collection of previously unpublished poems published posthumously in 1930), which shows an astonishing understanding of Elizabethan dramatic verse. Lord Byron was a dominant influence on the young Tennyson. Part of the family heritage was a strain of epilepsy, a disease then thought to be brought on by sexual excess and therefore shameful. One of Tennyson's brothers was confined to an insane asylum most of his life, another had recurrent bouts of addiction to drugs, a third had to be put into a mental home because of his alcoholism, another was intermittently confined and died relatively young. Of the rest of the 11 children who reached maturity, all had at least one severe mental breakdown. During the first half of his life Alfred thought that he had inherited epilepsy from his father and that it was responsible for the trances into which he occasionally fell until he was well over 40 years old. Tennyson escaped home in 1827 to attend Trinity College, Cambridge. In1828,

Tennyson enrolled at Trinity College, Cambridge. Despite his intelligence and good looks, he was excessively shy and was quite unhappy. In that same year, he and his brother Charles published *Poems by Two Brothers*. In 1829, Tennyson won the Oxford's Newdigate Prize for poetry. Although the poems in the book were mostly juvenilia, they attracted the attention of the "Apostles," an undergraduate literary club led by Arthur Henry Hallam. The "Apostles" provided Tennyson, who was tremendously shy, with much needed friendship and confidence as a poet. Tennyson's poem "Timbucktoo" brought him fame in 1929 and he won Cambridge's Chancellor's medal for the poem. In 1830, while Tennyson was still an undergraduate, his anthology of poems, "Chiefly Lyrical" was published. This anthology contains wonderful poems like "Mariana" but it made no significant impression of the reading public. Hallam and Tennyson became the best of friends; they toured Europe together in 1830 and again in 1832. In 1831, after his return, Tennyson was forced to leave the university without taking his degree, due to the death of his father. In 1832, Poems by Alfred Tennyson was published, in which early versions of many of his finest pieces appeared, including "The Lady of Shalott," "The Palace of Art," "The Lotos-Eaters," "Oenone," and "A Dream of Fair Women." The quality of the poems in the volume was not constant, and many of them were overly sentimental or lacking in polish. As a result, despite the fine lyrics mentioned above, the book received a very harsh critical reaction. Tennyson had never been able to stand criticism of his work, and he was deeply hurt. For a long time he wrote nothing, but he finally resolved to devote himself to the development of his poetic skill. Hallam's sudden death in 1833 greatly affected the young poet. The long elegy "In Memoriam" and many of Tennyson's other poems are tributes to Hallam. During the next few years, Tennyson continued to live with his family, which had now moved to London, and to apply himself to his studies and writing. He became engaged to Emily Sellwood, despite the objection of her parents, but felt it was impossible for them to marry because his financial resources were so limited. In 1842, a two-volume collection of his work appeared, containing many revisions of earlier poems, besides a number of excellent new ones, including "Morte d'Arthur," "Ulysses," and "Locksley Hall." At last Tennyson was recognised as one of the leading literary figures of the period and was acclaimed throughout England. He was provided with an annual pension by the British government. In June 1850, after an engagement of thirteen years, Tennyson and Emily were married. Later that same year Tennyson was appointed to the post of poet laureate, succeeding Wordsworth. Among the most notable poems he wrote while holding that office are the "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington" (1852) and "The Charge of the Light Brigade" (1854). Despite his fame, Tennyson remained shy and moved from London to a more secluded home. He worked intently on his Arthurian poems, the earliest of which had been published in the 1832 volume, and the first four idylls appeared in 1859. These rapidly became his most popular works, and he continued to revise and add to them until the *Idylls of the King* reached its present form in the edition of 1885.

The remainder of Tennyson's life was uneventful. He and Emily had two sons, whom they named Hallam and Lionel. Tennyson was hailed as the greatest of English poets and was awarded numerous honours; he received an honorary degree from Oxford University in 1885 and was offered the rectorship of Glasgow University. In 1883, he was raised to the peerage by Queen Victoria and was thereafter known as Baron Tennyson of Aldworth. He was the first Englishman to be granted such a high rank solely for literary distinction. Among his friends Tennyson counted such noteworthy people as Albert, the Prince Consort, W. E. Gladstone, the prime minister, Thomas Carlyle, the historian, and Edward Fitz Gerald, the poet.

All his life Tennyson continued to write poetry. His later volumes include *Maude, A Monodrama* (1853), *Enoch Arden* (1864), *Ballads and Poems* (1880), *Tiresias and Other Ballads* (1885), *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After* (1886), *Demeter and Other Poems* (1889), and *The Death of Oenone* (published posthumously in 1892). He also wrote a number of historical dramas in poetic form, among which are *Queen Mary* (1875), *Harold* (1876), *Becket* (1884), and *The*

Foresters (1892).

Alfred, Lord Tennyson was the most highly regarded poet of his period and the most widely read of all English poets. The quality of his work varied greatly, and much that he wrote is of little interest today, for he included in his poetry themes and subjects that were of intense interest only to the Victorians. Tennyson's thought was often shallow and dealt with matters of fleeting significance, but his technical skill and prosody were unsurpassed. Perhaps the most perceptive evaluation of his work is embodied in Tennyson's own remark to Carlyle:

I don't think that since Shakespeare there has been such a master of the English language as I to be sure, I have nothing to say.

Tennyson died at Aldworth House, his home in Surrey, on October 6, 1892, at the age of eighty-three. He was buried in the Poet's Corner at Westminster Abbey, and the copy of Shakespeare's play Cymbeline, which he had been reading on the night of his death, was placed in his coffin.

Tennyson as a Poet

"Tennyson is a great poet, for reasons that are perfectly clear. He has three qualities which are seldom found together except in the greatest poets: abundance, variety, and complete competence." T. S. Eliot.

Alfred Tennyson is as much representative poet of Victorian Age as was Chaucer of fourteenth century and Alexander Pope was of eighteenth century. Tennyson as a poet represented the true spirit of his age. He is not only the follower but also an interpreter of the age. His truly representative character made him universally popular in his own age. Followings are the features of his craftsmanship:

- **Poet of Nature**

Tennyson's poetry reflects a deep appreciation for the natural world, and his writing often celebrates the beauty and power of nature. In his poem "The Brook," for example, he describes the brook as a "babbling wanderer" that "goes on forever.' The poem celebrates the beauty and tranquility of nature, and suggests that the brook represents the continuity of life. He was sensitive to the varied aspects of nature. He observes closely and with accuracy the smallest detail and expresses it with delicate poetic feeling. The two are blended together- accurate observation and the poetic gift. Thus, he says of dawn:

And shake the darkness from their loosened manes

And beat the twilight into flakes of fire

In "The Lotus Eaters," Tennyson explores the theme of nature as a source of escape from the pressures of modern life. The poem describes a group of sailors who land on an island inhabited by the Lotus Eaters, who offer them a narcotic plant that causes them to forget their troubles and lose themselves in the beauty of the island. The influence of science on his work can best be seen in his nature descriptions. He wrote like a scientist with a gift for poetry. Everywhere the observation of the scientist is given the poetic touch – The basic, actual fact is dressed in poetry. In "Tithonus," he gives us the melancholy, autumnal touch:

The woods decay, the woods decay and fall,

The vapours weep their burthen to the ground,

Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,

And after many a summer dies the swan.

- **Lyrical Quality**

Tennyson's earliest attempts, quite obvious in the volumes of 1830, 1833, and 1842, led him to the lyric and legendary narrative as his principal themes, and these he handled with a skill and artistry which he rarely surpassed. W.H. Auden has described him as an essentially lyrical poet and his short lyrics – *Break, Break, Break* and *Tears Idle Tears* – are some of his greatest lyrics. They are spontaneous and full of melody. Later critics have felt that his work was shallow and lacked thought but there can be no denying that as lyrics- melodious, sweet and spontaneous, they have very few equals. He did turn to the problem of the day in his later work but even there critics felt that he was shallow and confused. However, confused and shallow or not, his poetry is superb.

- **Treatment of Love**

Tennyson's treatment of love is very different from that of Byron, Shelley or Browning. Byron looked upon love as some kind of elemental force that takes on man and his emotions. For Shelley and Browning it was more of a transcendental passion. But for Tennyson love was always a domestic passion. Whenever he talks of love, of girls and boys going out together, he follows it up quickly with the idea of marriage. This love poetry, at times, may seem cold and may not reach any height or depths. No one goes into extreme happiness over love and no one sinks into despair when love is lost. In fact his love poetry has a certain tenderness, graciousness and homeliness about it. It has a charm all its own, tender, warm and glowing with innocence. There is nothing sensuous about it.

- **Great Care and Skill**

No one can deny the great care and skill shown in Tennyson's work. His method of producing poetry was slowly to evolve the lines in his mind, commit them to paper, and to revise them till they were as near perfection as he could make them. Consequently we have a high level of poetical artistry. No one excels Tennyson in the deft application of sound to sense and in the subtle and pervading employment of alliteration and vowel-music. Such passages as this abound in his work:

Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,

The moan of doves in immemorial elms,

And murmuring of innumerable bees.

- **His Blank Verse**

His excellent craftsmanship is also apparent in his handling of English metres, in which he is a tireless experimenter. In blank verse he is not so varied and powerful as Shakespeare, nor so majestical as Milton, but in the skill of his workmanship and in his wealth of diction he falls but little short of these great masters.

- **His Pictorial Quality**

In this respect Tennyson follows the example of Keats. Nearly all Tennyson's poems, even the simplest, abound in ornate description of natural and other scenes. His method is to seize upon appropriate details, dress them in expressive and musical phrases, and thus throw a glistening image before the reader's eye:

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd

The knolls once more where, couched at ease,

The white kine glimmered, and the trees

Laid their dark arms about the field:

6.2.2 Robert Browning (1812 - 1889)

Robert Browning was only three years younger than Tennyson. And yet the differences between the two poets are so big that they seem to be writing in two different ages. Tennyson is basically an emotional poet, responding to the beauty and pain of life. His involvement with the polemics of his times was also deep: he was as much concerned with politics of democracy as with scientific researches of his time that had begun to instil doubts into the minds of the people. Robert Browning's concerns were never so comprehensive. An intense personal life made him inclined to study characters belonging to aristocracy, the priestly and the artistic classes in whom he noticed contradictions and paradoxes but also a zest for life.

Robert Browning was born on May 7, 1812, in Camberwell, England. His mother was an accomplished pianist and a devout evangelical Christian. His father, who worked as a bank clerk, was also an artist, scholar, antiquarian, and collector of books and pictures. His rare book collection of more than 6,000 volumes included works in Greek, Hebrew, Latin, French, Italian, and Spanish. Much of Browning's education came from his well-read father. It is believed that he was already proficient at reading and writing by the age of five. As a child he was precocious, and began to write poetry at the age of twelve. At the age of twelve he wrote a volume of Byronic verse entitled *Incondita*, which his parents attempted, unsuccessfully, to have published. A bright and anxious student, Browning learned Latin, Greek, and French by the time he was fourteen. From fourteen to sixteen he was educated at home, attended to by various tutors in music, drawing, dancing, and horsemanship. In his youth Browning was greatly influenced by Shelley – his poetry and his atheism. He did not remain an atheist for long but he continued to be a radical like Shelley. Despite this early passion, he apparently wrote no poems between the ages of thirteen and twenty. In 1828, Browning enrolled at the University of London, but he soon left, anxious to read and learn at his own pace. The random nature of his education later surfaced in his writing, leading to criticism of his poems' obscurities. His first poem *Pauline* (1833) which is a monologue addressed to Pauline, on "the incidents in the development of a soul" is autobiographical – a fragment of personal confession under a thin dramatic disguise. His *Paracelsus* (1835), is the story of the hero's unquenchable thirst for that breadth of knowledge which is beyond the grasp of one man. In 1840 he published *Sordello*, which was widely regarded as a failure. He also tried his hand at drama, but his plays, including *Strafford*, which ran for five nights in 1837, *Pippa Passes* 1841, and the *Bells and Pomegranates* 1847(a series of eight pamphlets), were for the most part unsuccessful. Nevertheless, the techniques he developed through his dramatic monologues – especially his use of diction, rhythm, and symbol—are regarded as his most important contribution to poetry, influencing such major poets of the twentieth century as Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, and Robert Frost.

In 1838 he went to Italy and its influence remained with him throughout his life. Much of his best work was done in this period. When he returned from Italy he became interested in the poems of Elizabeth Barrett and met her on 21 May 1845. It was the beginning of the most romantic literary love story. Her unreasonable and selfish father refused to give his permission for their marriage. Elizabeth Barrett Browning was afflicted by a lung illness and spinal injury that started during her teenage and affected her throughout her entire life. Because of her condition, her father was deeply jealous and protective of her. He refused to let her go abroad for treatment. Browning was then 34 years old and Elizabeth 6 years older. They decided to elope and on12 September 1846 they were secretly married at Marylebone Church and left for Italy thereafter. They led a happy married life where Elizabeth grew happy and fit. In 1849 a son Robert "Pen" Browning was born to them but their joy was cut short by the sad news of his mother's death. Browning was devastated and dreaded returning to England. They made several trips to England but Italy was their home. In the same year his *Collected Poems* was

published. Elizabeth inspired Robert's collection of poems *Men and Women* (1855), which he dedicated to her. Now regarded as one of Browning's best works, the book was received with little notice at the time; its author was then primarily known as Elizabeth Barrett's husband. Elizabeth Barrett Browning died in 1861, and Robert and Pen Browning soon moved to London. Browning went on to publish *Dramatis Personae* 1864 and he completed and published the long blank-verse poem *The Ring and the Book* in 1868.

It was with the publication of a series of collections of disconnected studies, chiefly monologues, that Browning's reputation as a great poet was firmly established. These volumes were – *Dramatic Lyrics* (1842), *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics* (1845), *Men and Women* (1855), *Dramatis Personae* (1864), *Dramatic Idylls* (1879-80). The dramatic lyrics in these collections were a poetry of a new kind in England. In them Browning brings the most varied personages to make their confessions to us. Some of them are historical, while others are the product of Browning's imagination, but all of them while unravelling the tangled web of their emotions and thoughts give expression to the optimistic philosophy of the poet. Some of the important dramatic lyrics are *Bishop Blougram's Apology*, *Two in a Gondola*, *Porphyria's Lover*, *Fra Lippo Lippi*, *The last Ride Together*, *Childe Roland to a Dark Tower Came*, *A Grammarian's Funeral*, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, *Prospice* and *My Last Duchess*. All of them have won for Browning the applause of readers who value "thought" in poetry. In (1868-69) Browning brought out four successive volumes of *The Ring and the Book*, which is his masterpiece.

The Browning Society was founded while he still lived, in 1881, and he was awarded D.C.L. by Oxford University in 1882 and the honorary degree by University of Edinburgh in 1884. His son by now was married and settled in Italy. Browning who had not visited since his wife's death, now made annual visits to the country and on one such visit, he caught a cold and developed Bronchitis. He passed away on12 December 1889 on the same day that his final volume of verse, *Asolando: Fancies and Facts*, was published, in 1889. He died in Italy and was buried at Westminster Abbey. Thus, ended the life of a great poet and a great literary figure of the nineteenth century.

Key Features of Browning's Art

Projection of Death

Browning writes about death a lot. He is often interested in how death dictates life decisions. He juxtaposes the beauty and happiness of life with the melancholy of inevitable death, as in "Porphyria's Lover" when the speaker wants to maintain the beauty of his life with Porphyria ironically through her death. In some cases, as depicted in "My Last Duchess" and *The Ring and the Book*, death serves as a punishment and a means of exploiting one's power.

That moment she was mine, mine, fair,
Perfectly pure and good: I found
A thing to do, and all her hair
In one long yellow string I wound
Three times her little throat around,
And strangled her. No pain felt she;
I am quite sure she felt no pain.

Porphyria's Love title should behere Parphyiuia's

Subjugation of Women

The unequal sharing of the burden of death brings us to the theme of the subjugation of women.

Both Browning and his wife wrote about the role of women and their place in society in their poetry. During his time, women had little opportunity to advance on their own and their entire social lives were dictated by either their husbands or fathers. Browning showcases the subjugation of women as an extreme in his poetry. In his works, women are murdered by men in an attempt to punish them and bring them back under control. In both "My Last Duchess" and "Porphyria's Lover" the women were murdered by their men, not because their own actions were so horrid, but because their significant others were insecure in their own power.

Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir.

My Last Duchess title should behere

Beauty and Art

In various poems, Browning contemplates the nature of beauty in its relationship to power and art. In "My Last Duchess", we see a man who collects beautiful art as an expression of his power. When his wife threatens his domestic power, he kills the living version of her and turns her into an art piece that he can acquire and once again control. Beauty is itself a source of power to be controlled and acquired. Much of his inspiration came from the Renaissance period, in which art was revolutionised.

Delusion

Perhaps Browning's most effectively used literary device is dramatic irony, in which the audience or reader is aware of something of which the speaker is not aware. Most often, what this dramatic irony reveals is that the speaker is deluded or does not quite realize the truth of something. Some poems feature a demented character who is not aware of the extent of his or her depravity or insanity. Examples are "My Last Duchess," "Porphyria's Lover," "Caliban upon Setebos" and "The Laboratory." Other poems feature a character whose reasons for behavior are not as clear-cut as he or she believes.

The quest

A theme that runs through much of Browning's poetry is that life is composed of a quest that the brave man commits to, even when the goal is unclear or victory unlikely. In some poems, this quest is literal, particularly in "Childe Roland to Dark Tower Came."

There they stood, ranged along the hill-sides, met
To view the last of me, a living frame

For one more picture! in a sheet of flame

I saw them and I knew them all. And yet

Dauntless the slug-horn to my lips I set,

And blew. "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came."

Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came title should behere

The grotesque

One of the elements in Browning's poetry that made him unique in his time and continues to resonate is his embrace of the grotesque as a subject worthy of poetic explanation. Most often, he explores the grotesque nature of human behavior and depravity. Consider "Porphyria's Lover," "Evelyn Hope," and "The Laboratory." Then there are examples like "Caliban upon Setebos," where the character is easy to sympathise with while being objectively a grotesque creature. And then there is "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came," which plunges head-first into a grotesque landscape.

Optimistic Outlook

There is a robust optimism reflected in all his poetry. It is in fact because of his invincible will and optimism that Browning is given preference over Tennyson whose poetry betrays weakness and helpless pessimism. Browning's boundless energy, his cheerful courage, his faith in life and in the development that awaits beyond the portals of death, give a strange vitality to his poetry. It is his firm belief in the immortality of the soul which forms the basis of his generous optimism, beautifully expressed in the following lines of *Pippa Passes*:

The year's at the spring,

And day's at the morn;

Morning's at seven;

The hill side's dew pearled;

The lark's on the wing;

The snails on the thorn,

God's in his heaven—

All's right with the world.

6.2.3 Matthew Arnold (1822 - 1888)

Another great poet of the early Victorian period is Matthew Arnold, though he is not so great as Tennyson and Browning. Unlike Tennyson and Browning who came under the influence of Romantic poets, Arnold, though a great admirer of Wordsworth, reacted against the ornate and fluent Romanticism of Shelley and Keats. He strove to set up a neo-classical ideal as against the Romantic. He gave emphasis on 'correctness' in poetry, which meant a scheme of literature which picks and chooses according to standards, precedents and systems, as against one which gives preference to an abundant stream of original music and representation. Besides being a poet, Arnold was a great critic of poetry, perhaps the greatest critics during the Victorian period, and he belongs to that rare category of the critic who is a poet also. He was a typical Victorian poet. Matthew Arnold, like Tennyson, showed traces of his age in his poetry. He was a British poet and critic who worked as an inspector of schools and is known today for his poetry and criticism. As he, himself said, "Tennyson may have had greater poetic sentiment and Browning more intellectual vigour but Arnold had a fusion of the two." In other words he combined in himself the poetic sentiment of Tennyson with the intellectual vigour

of Browning. As such his place in Victorian literature is assured.

A school teacher and historian named Thomas Arnold married Mary Penrose, the daughter of an Anglican priest, in 1820 and settled in Laleham-on-the-Thames. The couple had ten children and their eldest son but second child was Matthew Arnold, born on 24th December, 1822. In 1828, when he was six years old, his father was appointed the headmaster of Rugby School and the family moved from Laleham to Rugby. The next year, Arnold met Arthur Hugh Clough, a boy four years older to him, who would go on to become a poet, an educationist, and his lifelong friend. In 1829, the Arnold family moved to a holiday house at Fox How in the Lake District where Arnold met William Wordsworth.

Arnold began his studies at his uncle the Reverend John Buckland's Preparatory School, as a boarder, and was enrolled at Rugby School in 1837 to be under his father's personal care where he began to win prizes for essay writing and for poetry in Latin and English. In 1840, he composed the poem *Alaric at Rome* which won a prize and was immediately printed. In the same year he received an open scholarship to Balliol College, Oxford and he joined the institution the following year. In 1842, however, his father died of a sudden heart attack just before his forty seventh birthday, who is remembered in the famous elegy *Rugby Chapel*, written fifteen years after his father's death. Arnold won the prestigious Newdigate Prize for his poem *Cromwell* in 1843, but in the following year he received a second class honours degree, dismaying his family and friends who had expected he would secure a first. He went back to Rugby School, in the same year, to work as a trainee teacher of sorts. In 1846 he secured a one year open scholarship at Oriel College much to the joy of those whom he had dismayed earlier with his second honours. During his studies at Oriel College, he toured places like Ireland, Wales and France and also cultivated his poetic talent. His stay at Oxford was the happiest part of his life. Here he composed some of his finest poems *The Scholar Gipsy* (1853) and *Thyrsis* (1866), and the famous *Preface to The Essays in Criticism* (1865). In 1847 he was made private secretary to Lord Lansdowne. In 1851, at the age of 28 years, Arnold married Francis Lucy Wightman who was the daughter of the Justice of the Queen's Bench. He now took up the position of Inspector of schools, a position he held for thirty five years. He led a happily married life and had six children of whom three survived.

Arnold did not remain very happy in his profession after the first few years. He often complains, in his letters, of the drudgery of the work that he had to do. Robert Lowe, the minister who had been responsible for introducing certain changes into the education system that made Arnold's professional life difficult to endure, was critiqued later in *Culture and Anarchy* (1869). The nature of Arnold's profession, taxing though it had been, had enabled him to observe his country and its people from very close quarters. Arnold's job required him to travel across a large part of England and to interact with the Nonconformist (Protestant) part of the population, who were the poor and the middle class people and were fast becoming the most important segment of the electorate and of the society. In 1849 he published his first volume- "The Strayed Reveller and Other Poems". "Empedocles on Etna" was published in 1852 and the second volume of poetry in 1855; "Merope" in 1859 and "The New Poems" in 1867. In 1853 he started writing prose. His critical prose was collected in 1865 and published under the title *Essays in Criticism*; followed by *Lectures on the Study of Celtic Literature* (1867), *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), *Last Essays on Church and Religion* (1877) *Mixed Essays* (1879) and *Irish Essays* (1882). In 1857 he was elected Professor of Poetry at Oxford and during the ten years that he remains in this post, he publishes quite a few books on literary criticism. In 1861, his childhood friend, Arthur Hugh Clough dies and the grief-stricken Arnold composes the poem *Thyrsis*. He received a pension of £250 a year in 1883. He died very suddenly of heart failure in 1888 when running to take a train that would have taken him to Liverpool to see his daughter who was coming from the U.S.

He was a man of the world entirely free of worldliness and a man of letters without a trace of pedantry. In other words he was a deeply knowledgeable man but did not make a show of his knowledge or learning. He was deeply read but presented an image of lightness. He did not seem serious but wrote very seriously on heavy topics. His writing clashed with the image he presented to the world. His critical views which had a high seriousness and the melancholic note in his poetry clashed with the urbane and frivolous manner he put on. He is considered to be the link between Romanticism and Modernism. His use of symbolism in "Dover Beach" gives us a nightmarish world from which all faith has been withdrawn. It was typically romantic while his pessimistic outlook was modern. His writings are marked with sincerity and purpose and have a distinctive style His prose has beauty, is thoughtful, reflective and restrained. He felt that poetry should be a criticism of life and express a philosophy. He believed that true happiness comes from within and we should seek within ourselves for good while outwardly accepting the turmoil and disturbances of the world. We should not believe in eternal happiness and should have more realistic and moderate hopes and desires rather than live in a dream of something that may never be achieved. He found peace in nature as against the change and disturbance of the outside world. Matthew Arnold, then was a quiet and gracious man. He was refined, educated and a scholar but never made a show of his learning. He started as a poet but later switched to prose and is, today known for it. However his poetry too is beautiful and has a wistful and melancholic air about it. It reflects the frustration and pain felt by the nineteenth century people.

Most of the poetry of Arnold gives expression to the conflict of the age—between spontaneity and discipline, emotion and reason, faith and scepticism. Being distressed by the unfaith, disintegration, complexity and melancholy of his times, Arnold longed for primitive faith, wholeness, simplicity, and happiness. This melancholy note is present throughout his poetry. Even in his nature poems, though he was influenced by the 'healing power' of Wordsworth, in his sterner moods he looks upon Nature as a cosmic force indifferent to, or as a lawless and insidious foe of man's integrity. In his most characteristic poem Empedocles on Etna Arnold deals with the life of a philosopher who is driven to suicide because he cannot achieve unity and wholeness; his skeptical intellect has dried up the springs of simple, natural feeling. His attitude to life is very much in contrast with the positive optimism of Browning whose Ben Ezra grows old on the belief that "The best is yet to be!" As a critic Arnold wants poetry to be plain, and severe. Though poetry is an art which must give aesthetic pleasure, according to Arnold, it is also a criticism of life. He looks for 'high seriousness' in poetry, which means the combination of the finest art with the fullest and deepest insight, such as is found in the poetry of Homer, Dante and Shakespeare. Arnold's own poetry was greatly affected by his critical theories, and we find that whereas Tennyson's poetry is ornate and Browning's grotesque, Arnold's poetry on the whole is plain and prosaic. In setting forth his spiritual troubles Arnold seeks first of all to achieve a true and adequate statement, devoid of all non-essential decorations. The reader gets the impression that the writing is neither inspired nor spontaneous. It is the result of intellectual effort and hard labour. But there are occasions in the course of his otherwise prosaic poems, when Arnold suddenly rises from the ground of analysis and diagnosis into sensuous emotion and intuitions, and then language, imagery, and rhythm fuse into something which has an incomparable charm and beauty.

6.2.4 Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806 - 1861)

Elizabeth Barrett Browning was born near Durham, Durham County, England. She was an English poet whose reputation rests chiefly upon her love poems. Elizabeth was the eldest of 12 children of Edward Barrett Moulton (later Edward Moulton Barrett). Most of her girlhood was spent at a country house within sight of the Malvern Hills, in Worcestershire, where she was extraordinarily happy. She began writing poems from an early age of eight. At the age of 15, however, she fell seriously ill, probably as the result of a spinal injury, and her health was permanently affected. Later in life, she also developed lung problems, possibly tuberculosis. She took laudanum for the pain from

an early age, which is likely to have contributed to her frail health. Her first published work worth mentioning was *An Essay on Mind; with Other Poems (1826)*, which was of slight importance. In the 1840s, Elizabeth was introduced to literary society through her distant cousin and patron John Kenyon. Her first adult collection of poems was published in 1838, and she wrote prolifically from 1841 to 1844, producing poetry, translation, and prose. She campaigned for the abolition of slavery, and her work helped influence reform in child labour legislation. Her prolific output made her a rival to Tennyson as a candidate for poet laureate on the death of Wordsworth. Elizabeth's volume *Poems* (1844) brought her great success, attracting the admiration of the writer Robert Browning. Their correspondence, courtship, and marriage were carried out in secret, for fear of her father's disapproval. Following the wedding, she was indeed disinherited by her father. In 1846, the couple moved to Italy, where she lived for the rest of her life. After a very happy married life Elizabeth died in Florence in 1861. A collection of her later poems were published by her husband shortly after her death. After her first work mentioned above there was a pause of nine years; then appeared *Prometheus Bound* (1833). Other works are *The Seraphim and Other Poems* (1838), *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (1847), *Casa Guidi Windows* (1851), *Aurora Leigh* (1857), an immense poem in blank verse, and *Last Poems* (1862). She wrote many of her shorter pieces for magazines, the most important contributions being *The Cry of the Children* (1841) for Blackwood's and *A Musical Instrument* (1860) for the Cornhill. As a narrative poet Mrs. Browning is a comparative failure, for in method she is discursive and confused, but she has command of a sweet, clear, and often passionate style. She has many slips of taste, and her desire for elevation sometimes leads her into what Rossetti called "falsetto masculinity," a kind of hysterical bravado. Metrical faults and bad rhymes mar much of her verse, but in the intimate and ardent *Sonnets from the Portuguese,* on which her fame now rests, the form necessarily restricts her discursiveness, and her love for Robert Browning shines clear.

6.2.5 Edward Fitzgerald (1809 - 1883)

Born near Woodbridge, in Suffolk, Edward Fitzgerald was educated at the Grammar School, Bury St Edmunds, and at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he graduated in 1830. After this time he spent most of his life in Suffolk and was something of a recluse. However, he had many friends among the literary figures of his day, including Tennyson, Thackeray, and Carlyle. Like Thomas Gray, he lives in general literature by one poem. This, after long neglect, came to be regarded as one of the great things in English literature. In 1859 he issued the *Rubaiyát* of the early Persian poet Omar Khayyam. His version is a very free translation, cast into curious four-lined stanzas, which have an extraordinary cadence, rugged yet melodious, strong yet sweet. The feeling expressed in the verses, with much energy and picturesque effect, is stoical resignation. Fitzgerald also wrote a prose dialogue of much beauty called *Euphranor: a Dialogue on Youth* (1851); and his surviving letters testify to his quiet and caustic humour.

6.2.6 Arthur Hugh Clough (1819 - 1861)

He was born at Liverpool, and educated at Rugby, where Dr. Arnold made a deep impression upon his mind. He proceeded to Oxford, where, like his friend Matthew Arnold, he later became a Fellow of Oriel College. He travelled much, and then became Warden of University Hall, London. This post he soon resigned, and some public appointments followed. He died at Florence, after a long pilgrimage to restore his failing health. His death was bewailed by Arnold in his beautiful elegy *Thyrsis*. Clough's first long poem was *The Bothie of Toper-na-Fuosich* (1848), which is written in rough classical hexameters, contains some fine descriptions of the Scottish Highlands and now consider as his verse novel. He wrote little else of much value. His *Amours de Voyage* (1849) is also in hexa- meters: *Dipsychychus* (1850) is a meditative poem. His poetry is charged with much of the deep-seated unrest and despondency that mark the work of Arnold. His lyrical gift is not great, but once at least, in the powerful *Say not the Struggle Naught Availeth*, he soared into greatness.

6.2.7 Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807 - 1882)

He was born at Portland, Maine, and came of Yorkshire stock. He began to publish poetry when he was thirteen years old. After studying at Bowdoin College he travelled abroad to equip himself for the work of professor of modern languages at his college, a post which he accepted in 1829. In 1836 he was appointed to a similar position at Harvard, and more travelling followed. He resigned this professorship in 1854 in order to devote himself entirely to poetry, of which he had already produced a large amount. His major works are *Outre-Mer. A Pilgrimage beyond the Sea* (1834-35), based upon his earliest travels; *Voices of the Night* (1839), a collection that includes some of his best shorter poems; *Evangeline* (1847), a tragical story of the early colonial days, written in smooth and melodious hexameters; *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855), a collection of Indian folk-tales, written in unrhymed octosyllabic verse; *The Courtship of Miles Standish* (1858); and *Tales of a Wayside Inn* (1863).

Longfellow was always a careful and assiduous poet, ranging over a great variety of subjects, but in his anxiety to excel in all branches of poetry he wrote too much, and thereby the general level of his poetry was lowered. His narrative power is quite considerable, and his descriptions, especially those of his native country, have grace and fidelity. He lacks, however, the fine fury and the high energy of style that distinguish the great poet. His lyrics are numerous, melodious, and often marked by true feeling, but they have not the demonic qualities that are necessary to place them in the front rank.

6.2.8 Coventry Patmore (1823 - 1896)

Born in Woodford, Essex, in 1823, Coventry Patmore was a critic and poet although he initially wanted to become a painter. His love of literature was encouraged by his father with whom he formed a strong and loving bond from early childhood. His father, editor and novelist Peter George Patmore, educated his son, sent him to Paris when he was sixteen, and encouraged him to publish his first book, *Poems* (1844). Famous for his *The Angel in the House* (1854-1862) that contemplates on marital bliss and an ideal wife, Coventry Patmore was a close associate of the Pre-Raphaelites. The result of this association was his poem 'The Seasons' that he contributed to *The Germ*, a Pre-Raphaelite periodical. In tracing the courtship and marriage of the fictional characters Felix and Honoraria, *The Angel in the House* is actually on Patmore's wife Emily. Interspersed among his sequence *The Unknown Eros* (1877), Patmore wrote a number of poems after the death of his wife, many addressed to her. The first installment, the most commonly known part of *The Angel in the House* which was also more popular in its own time than the second part, takes the form of two sections (or "books") - "The Betrothal" and "The Espousals." Similarly, the second installment of *The Angel in the House*, commonly referred to by critics as *The Victories of Love*, was also written in two separate sections — "Faithful Forever" and "The Victories of Love." These two separate installments published at different dates and different points in Patmore's life are essentially two different poems. In later years Patmore lived at Lymington, where he died in 1896. He was buried in Lymington churchyard.

6.3 LATER POETS

In the later Victorian period a movement took place in English poetry, which resembled something like a new Romantic Revival. It was called the Pre Raphaelite Movement and was dominated by a new set of poets-Rossetti, Swinburne and Morris, who were interested simply in beauty. They were quite satisfied with the beauty of diction, beauty of rhythm, and the beauty of imagery in poetry. They were not interested in the contemporary movements of thought which formed the substance of Arnold's poetry, and had influenced Tennyson a good deal. They made use of the legends of the Middle Ages not as a vehicle for moral teaching or as allegories of modern life, as Tennyson had done, but simply as stories, the intrinsic beauty of which was their sufficient justification. There was no conscious theory underlying their work as there was in the case of Arnold's

poetry. If early Victorian poetry was enriched in the hands of Tennyson, Browning and Arnold; the late Victorian poetry nevertheless brought out the tenets of Victorianism. The most notable among these poets were Thomas Hardy, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Algernon Charles Swinburne.

6.3.1 Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844 - 1889)

Gerard Manley Hopkins is considered to be one of the greatest poets of the Victorian era. However, because his style was so radically different from that of his contemporaries, his best poems were not accepted for publication during his lifetime, and his achievement was not fully recognised until after World War I. He was born at Stratford, Essex, England, on July 28, 1844. He was the eldest of nine children to Manley Hopkins and Catherine Smith, a prosperous and artistic couple. His father was by turn, the proprietor of a marine insurance firm, the British Consul General in Hawaii, Church Warden, and a published writer and reviewer. His mother was greatly fond of music and reading. They were deeply religious High Church Anglicans and Hopkins was inclined towards asceticism from his boyhood. Hopkins' maternal aunt Maria Smith Giberne taught him to sketch. His talent was promoted by many and his first ambition was to be a painter. His early training in visual arts later helped him when Hopkins became a poet. While he was studying at the Highgate boarding school, he composed his first poem, 'The Escorial', at the age of ten, inspired by John Keats. Hopkins attended the Balliol College, Oxford, where he studied Classics. He won a 'Double First' in the subject and was awarded the title, 'The Star of Balliol'. He forged a lifelong friendship with Robert Bridges at Balliol, which later resulted in Hopkins' posthumous fame. At Balliol, Hopkins was greatly impressed by the work of Christina Rossetti, befriended writer and critic Walter Pater and became a follower of Edward Pusey, member of the Oxford Movement – all these proved to be seminal influences. In 1864 he first read John Henry Newman's Apologia Pro Vita Sua [A Defence of My Life] which is the classic defense by Newman of his religious views and his conversion to Catholicism. Cardinal Newman was a prominent figure in the Oxford Movement which had led to the establishment of Anglo-Catholicism. Two years later in 1866, Hopkins was received into the Catholic Church and within a short while he resolved to join priesthood. His conversion estranged him from his family. As the first step towards his religious life, Hopkins burnt all his poems because he felt that poetry would prevent him from total devotion to his faith. He later reconciled to the idea of a poetic vocation for a priest, on reading the philosophy of Duns Scotus, the medieval theologist. Hopkins joined the Society of Jesus to become a Jesuit father. Hopkins went to learn theology at St. Beuno's Jesuit House in North Wales, which had a lasting influence on his creativity. There he came across Welsh poetry from which he fashioned his unique 'sprung rhythm'. At the encouragement of his superior Hopkins broke his silence of seven years to write 'The Wreck of the Deutschland' which praised the heroic self-sacrifice of a group of Franciscan nuns whose ship sank in a storm. Though conventional in theme, the poem was daringly experimental, where he realised "the echo of a new rhythm" which he named "sprung rhythm".

The frown of his face
Before me, the hurtle of hell
Behind, where, where was a, where was a place?
I whirled out wings that spell
And fled with a fling of the heart to the heart of the Host.
My heart, but you were dove winged, I can tell,
Carrier-witted, I am bold to boast,
To flash from the flame to the flame then, tower from the grace to the grace
The Wreck of Deutschland

The Wreck of Deutschland

He continued to write poetry but these were read only in manuscript form by his friends. After working as a parish priest, teacher and preacher in several churches and institutions, Hopkins was appointed Professor of Greek Literature at University College, Dublin. He found the environment uncongenial and he was unhappy and overworked. In 1885, he started writing a series of sonnets beginning with "Carrion Comfort" that mirror his anguish, desolation and Gerard Manley Hopkins frustration and are known as "terrible sonnets". They showcase the great dilemma he felt in reconciling his immense fascination for the sensuous world and the equally powerful devotion to religious vocation. Hopkins died of typhoid fever in 1889 with the last words on his lips, "I am happy, so happy" and is buried in Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin. In 1918, Robert Bridges, his friend who was the poet laureate of Britain at the time, published a collection of his poems. These original, subtle and vibrant verses, with rich aural patterning, displaying imaginative and intellectual depths had a marked influence on the major 20th century poets like T.S. Eliot, W.H. Auden, Dylan Thomas and many others.

6.3.2 Thomas Hardy (1840 - 1928)

Thomas Hardy was born on 2 June, 1840 in the village of Higher Bockhampton in the county of Dorset, one of the poorest and backward rural counties of England remaining unchanged for centuries. His father, also named Thomas, was a stonemason, builder and a fiddler who used to play in the local parish choir. His mother Jemima was the true guiding star of his life, who though, was a housemaid and a cook before her marriage, was an avid reader of literary books. Hardy inherited his musicality from his father and his love for books from his mother. It is said that Hardy loved solitude and drew his impulses from the natural world around him. He received his schooling first from National school in Bockhampton and later at Mr. Last's Academy in Dorchester, a non-conformist school. Though he showed great academic potential, his formal education came to an end at the age of 16, when he was apprenticed to a local architect, John Hicks. During his tenure there he came across the Dorchester poet William Barnes who influenced him to write nature poems and Horace Moule, a scholar who encouraged him to read Greek tragedies and contemporary English literature. Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* had a profound influence on him. In 1862 Hardy moved to London and worked as an assistant architect to Arthur Blomfield who restored and designed churches. He won prizes from the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Architectural Association. Hardy was appointed to oversee the disinterment of graves in the churchyard of St. Pancras Old Church. This event had a great influence on him and he later wrote his 'grave' poems based on this experience. Hardy was drawn into the cultural life of London. He visited museums, galleries, attended plays and operas. He read avidly and started writing poetry. Though the first poems were rejected by publishers, one finally published in the Chambers Journal won him a prize. His poems highlighted his concerns which he had gleaned from reading and observation, and foreshadowed the themes of his later prose fiction. Disillusioned with traditional Christianity, Hardy became more and more aware of human misery and loneliness. His fatalism stemmed from the hard realisation of an uncaring universe and the role of chance in human life. Disenchanted by London, Hardy returned to his native Bockhampton in 1867, worked for a while as an architect and then gave up his job to pursue a full time career as a writer. In the meanwhile, Hardy who had experienced several rejections from women, fell in love with Emma Lavinia Gifford, a Cornish lady, and married her. They settled at Max Gate, a large Mid-Victorian villa, which Hardy had designed himself, which he considered his 'country retreat' – and this became his permanent abode. Hardy considered poetry to be, "the heart of literature". In 1898 he published the *Wessex Poems*. Wessex is Hardy's fictional universe. Strongly identifying himself and his work with Dorset, Hardy borrowed the name of the old Anglo-Saxon kingdom, coined the names of villages and towns to represent actual places and even provided a map of the area. He was fascinated with other features of southern England especially the Stonehenge, the ancient druid rocks, which

interest is reflected in his poems like 'The Shadow of the Stone'.

Hardy's poetry wears a pessimistic, fatalistic and existential outlook evoking the dark, rugged landscape of Dorset. It laments the bleakness of human condition. He is one who "holds that if way to the Better there be, it exacts a full look at the Worst", as he states in his poem 'In Tenebris II'. Even the term 'In Tenebris', meaning 'in the darkness', which forms the title of a series of lyrics, highlights the bleak, doomstruck human world. His poems are haunted by a pervasive sense of the forlorn. There are instances in which Hardy's tragic view of life makes him refer to humans as 'Time's Laughingstocks', and point out to 'Life's Little Ironies'. Among Hardy's poems one can identify a number of recurring themes and images. These overarching themes can be divided into three central categories of ghosts, grave and afterlife; God, nature and rural life; passage of time; love and war. His love poems are not traditional romantic love poems but starker and darker poems of loss, ghosts and transience.

Thomas Hardy published about eight volumes of short poems. *His Wessex Poems* (1898) present the dichotomy between ancient rustic traditions and modern urban developments. With unrelenting irony, these poems question the cosmic order of things — expressing the pain and despair of trying to assert the value of human life. Set against Dorset as the backdrop, the poems project a bleak nature. His 'The Darkling Thrush' , contained in *Poems of the Past and the Present* (1901) begins with the typical note of Victorian despair and melancholy, perfected by a dreary landscape of 'spectre-gray' 'frost', 'winter's dregs', 'strings of broken lyres' but ends with an optimistic note. He wrote a number of war poems, relating to the Boer Wars and anticipating the cataclysmic World War I, like 'Drummer Hodge', 'In Times of Breaking of Nations' and 'The Man He Killed'. *Time's Laughing Stocks* (1909) is another volume that exhibit Hardyesque philosophy. The elegiac poems of the period 1912-1913 published in Satires of Circumstances, Lyrics and Reveries (1914) celebrate the memory of Hardy's first wife Emma. His Emma poems are 'the finest and the strangest celebrations of the dead in English poetry.' The major collections of his poems include: *Wessex Poems* (1898), *Poems of the Past and the Present* (1901), *Time's Laughingstocks and Other Verses* (1909), *Moments of Vision* (1917), *Satires of Circumstance* (1914), *Collected Poems* (1919) etc. The University of Aberdeen awarded him an honorary degree and in 1910, King George V conferred the Order of Merit on him. In 1912, the Royal Society of Literature awarded him a gold medal. Hardy was visited by several writers at Max Gate and he exercised tremendous influence on writers like James Barrie, Rudyard Kipling, G B Shaw, Virginia Woolf and many others. During the World War I he took active part in campaigns, visiting military hospitals and POW (Prisoner/s of War) camps. His poems on war, with their visceral imagery influenced the War poets like Siegfried Sassoon. After his 87th birthday, Hardy grew weaker and he became ill with pleurisy. He died on 11 January, 1928 and had two simultaneous funerals. His body was cremated and ashes deposited in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey, while his heart was buried alongside Emma in Stinsford Churchyard in Dorchester.

6.3.3 Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837 - 1909)

Swinburne was born at 7 Chester Street, Grosvenor Place, London, on 5 April 1837. He was the eldest of six children born to Captain (later Admiral) Charles Henry Swinburne (1797–1877) and Lady Jane Henrietta. Swinburne began to write poetry as a friend and admirer of Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites, but he soon developed his own style, making his own use of influences from Greek, Elizabethan, and Jacobean drama. *Atlanta in Calydon* (1865), an attempt at an English version of an ancient Greek tragedy, was his first considerable effort in poetic form, and it attracted notice at once. *Poems and Ballads* (1866), a second extraordinary book, was owing to its choice of unconventional subjects, criticised at being wicked. His other works include, *Songs before Sunrise* (1871), a collection of poems chiefly in praise of Italian liberty; *Erechtheus* (1876), a further and less successful effort at

Greek tragedy; and *Tristram and Other Poems* (1882), a narrative of much passion and force, composed in the heroic couplet. He continued to write and publish until the year of his death. But his first volume of *Poems and Ballads* remains his most significant monument. *Poems and Ballads* (1866) and *Poems and Ballads* second series (1878) produced a sense of sensuality that is both a moral and spiritual challenge to the ethos of the period, and in that sense it ushers in the Pre-Raphaelite movement in a subtle way. Swinburne's rebellion against the established codes is reflected in his anti-Christian stance, and that baffled many Victorians. His love poems, instead of celebrating the nature of love, rather explore the pains. *A Forsaken Garden* (1878) is a case in point, where he says, 'in the lips that whispered, the eyes that had lightened/Love was dead'. Swinburne developed to an extreme a tendency that was implicit in the whole romantic tradition. One can delineate an eternal youth in Swinburne—in his paganic rebellion and his eloquence on overthrow of established governments.

Swinburne was an alcoholic and algolagniac and highly excitable. He liked to be flogged. His health suffered, and in 1879 at the age of 42, he was taken into care by his friend, Theodore Watts-Dunton, who looked after him for the rest of his life at The Pines, Putney Hill, Putney. Watts-Dunton took him to the lost town of Dunwich, on the Suffolk coast, on several occasions in the 1870s. In Watts-Dunton's care Swinburne lost his youthful rebelliousness and developed into a figure of social respectability. It was said of Watts-Dunton that he saved the man and killed the poet. Swinburne died at the Pines on 10 April 1909, at the age of 72, and was buried at St. Boniface Church, Bonchurch on the Isle of Wight.

6.3.4 Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828 - 1882)

The son of émigré Italian scholar Gabriele Pasquale Giuseppe Rossetti and his wife Frances Mary Lavinia Polidori, Gabriel Charles Dante Rossetti was born in London, on 12 May 1828. His family and friends called him Gabriel, but in publications he put the name Dante first in honour of Dante Alighieri. He was the brother of poet Christina Rossetti, critic William Michael Rossetti, and author Maria Francesca Rossetti. His father was a Roman Catholic, at least prior to his marriage, and his mother was an Anglican; ostensibly Gabriel was baptised as and was a practising Anglican. John William Polidori, who had died seven years before his birth, was Rossetti's maternal uncle. During his childhood, Rossetti was home educated and later attended King's College School, and often read the Bible, along with the works of Shakespeare, Dickens, Sir Walter Scott, and Lord Byron.

Rossetti turned to poetry from painting, his mind nourished on Dante and the early Italian poets, his Italian heredity and background strongly felt. His first poems appeared in the short lived Pre-Raphaelite periodical, *The Germ* (1850), and others in the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* (1856), which also printed the early work of William Morris. His *Hand and Soul,* a delicate prose study, and his famous *The Blessed Damozel*, with its simplicity and exquisite spiritual quality, are characteristic of the ideals of the Pre-Raphaelites. His translations of *The Early Italian Poets* appeared in 1861 and again in a new arrangement as *Dante and his Circle* in 1874. His first volume of original poems appeared in 1870, he published only one other new volume, *Ballads and Sonnets* in 1881, the year before his death. It was Rossetti's early study of Dante which familiarised him with the symbolising and sacramentalising aspect of the medieval mind, and his own temperament also encouraged a tendency to identify the concretely physical with the permanently spiritual. This habit of mind was not one which came easily to the Victorians, with the result that Pre-Raphaelite influence in poetry apart from Rossetti's often led only to pseudo-medieval attitudinising, coy archaisms and pictorial lushness. The attempt to reduce everything to an idea or an essence is one of the main characteristic of his poetry. Rossetti remains an impressive, if in some respects a puzzling poet, who possessed energy, even a savagery that is very unlike anything, that is found in other Pre-Raphaelite poets.

6.3.5 William Morris (1834 -1896)

Morris began writing poetry as a Pre-Raphaelite, under Rossetti's influence. Poetry was only one of his many interests; architecture, painting, and most of all the "lesser arts" of decoration progressively took up his attention. *The Defence of Guinevere* (1858) is Pre-Raphaelite in manner and for the most part medieval in subject. Morris' long narrative poems- *The Life and Death of Jason* (1867), *The Earthly Paradise* (1868-70), *Sigurd the Volsung* (1876) - show him trying a variety of poetic styles and following a variety of models. He considered Chaucer his master in narrative verse. A considerable amount of Morris' later verse was inspired by his socialist faith. *The Pilgrims of Hope* and other poems appeared in *The Common Weal*, the organ of the Socialist League, which Morris founded and edited. Pre-Raphaelite, medievalist, romantic storyteller, lover of the fierce Norse legends, Socialist worker and fighter, and all the time craftsman and propagandist for the arts, Morris seems at first sight to be an inexplicable mixture. For him, craftsmanship, supreme in the Middle Ages, was the heritage and the guarantee of free men everywhere; poetry was a craft like any other, and he was prepared to weave carpets.

6.3.6 George Meredith (1818 - 1909)

George Meredith (1818-1909) began by writing delightful and easily intelligible lyrics of which the most memorable is *Love in the Valley*. The complex analysis of mood, which is characteristic of the novels, has a poetical counterpart in *Modern Love* (1862). In the philosophical poems such as *Poems and Lyrics of the Joy of Earth* (1883), in their bard and cramped language, attempted to reconcile morality and the teaching of biology. Meredith showed to his age that 'Earth' offered man no easy way of over-coming his brute nature.

6.3.7 The Bronte Sisters, Charlotte Bronte: 1816-1855, Emily Bronte: 1818-1848, Anne Bronte: 1820-1849

Charlotte, Emily and Anne Brontë, known for their prose fiction, also wrote poetry that was compiled in *Poems by Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell,* published in 1848. The poems by Currer (Charlotte) are 'Pilate's Wife's Dream', 'Mementos', The Wife's Will', 'Frances', 'Life', 'Gilbert', 'Evening Solace', 'Stanzas', 'Apostasy' and so on. Ellis (Emily) wrote poems like 'The Lady to her Guitar', 'The Two Children', 'Last Words', 'Old Stoic', 'My Comforter', 'Encouragement' and 'Warning and Reply'. Acton's (Anne) poems like 'Despondency', 'Confidence', 'The Narrow Way', 'Lines Written from Home', and 'Domestic Peace' are contained in this volume too. In 'Pilate's Wife's Dream', the speaker is a woman whose feminine predicament has been subtly expressed in the dichotomy between despair and hope. 'Mementos' describes the hopelessness of a woman writer, whose plethora of 'mementos of past pain and pleasure' expressed in 'relics old' are becoming antique and 'mossing over'. 'The Wife's Will' expresses the loyalty and longing of a woman to be with her lover. In 'The Lady to her Guitar' the poet manifests the nostalgia of a broken hearted woman whose memories are replenished with the tune of her 'old Guitar'. The poems like 'Sympathy' and 'Plead for Me' dwells on a solitariness and love for that. Anne's poems also glisten with gloom and despondency, but finally a dream for distant freedom triumphs.

6.3.8 Amy Levy (1861 - 1889)

It is an interesting trivia that Amy Levy, a Jewish poet, was in her time the only Jewish woman at Newnham College, Cambridge. With one of her seniors, Vernon Lee, a fellow poet, Amy Levy composed poems on Sapphic love, which tags her as the 'New Woman' poet discussing on unconventional themes like homoeroticism. The poem 'To Vernon Lee' brings out the affection between Levy and Lee in sensual imagery. *Xantippe and Other Verses* (1881) was however a much popular collection by Amy Levy. The nominating poem 'Xantippe' is in the form of a dramatic monologue. The speaker Xantippe is an old woman, voicing her angst that her husband rather treated

her as one expected to serve 'maiden labour' instead of intellectual companionship while her 'high thoughts', her 'golden dreams' and soul 'yearned for knowledge'. Quite clearly, we can see the first outpourings of feminist consciousness in Lee.

Levy's other notable feminist verses include *Magdalen* (1884) and *A Ballad of Religion and Marriage* (1888). The former is a bitter dramatic monologue spoken by a 'fallen' woman who is dying in a religious penitentiary where she redeems her earlier conduct. The latter poem contests the traditional division into 'married' and 'odd' women. With the choric repetition on marriage as a way of God, there is the implicit grievance of the Victorian woman fatally trapped in incompatible marriage. *A Minor Poet and Other Verses* (1884) contains dramatic monologues and lyric poems. 'A Minor Poet' perceptibly bears Amy's self-inscription, she is a 'poet crawling between earth and heaven', her lack of popularity is the victimhood of gender politics: 'Queen Luck, that rules the world befriend me now/And freely I'll forgive you many wrongs'.

While travelling in Florence in 1886, Levy met Vernon Lee, a fiction writer and literary theorist six years her senior, and fell in love with her. Both women went on to explore the themes of Sapphic love in their works. Lee inspired Levy's poem "To Vernon Lee". Levy remains a topic of discussion amongst scholars in terms of whether or not she is to be considered a Victorian Lesbian writer. She had sent several poems to her friend Violet Paget, also known as Vernon Lee, confessing her love. These poems include her famous works "To Vernon Lee" and "New Love, New Life." Both of these pieces express messages of unrequited love to another woman. Scholars continue to debate if these gestures were that of friendship or intense passion. Levy experienced episodes of major depression from an early age. In her later years, her depression worsened in connection to her distress surrounding her romantic relationships and her awareness of her growing deafness. On 9 September 1889, two months away from her 28th birthday, she died by suicide "at the residence of her parents at Endsleigh Gardens" by inhaling carbon monoxide. Oscar Wilde wrote an obituary for her in *The Women's World* in which he praised her gifts. The first Jewish woman to be cremated in England, her ashes were buried at Balls Pond Road Cemetery in London.

6.3.9 Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830 - 1894)

Another Pre-Raphaelite poet and sister to D.G. Rossetti, Christina Rossetti is best known for her feminist poem *Goblin Market*. Being a woman, she was not included within the group Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, though she contributed to *The Germ*. *Goblin Market* paints the potential force of sisterhood, wherein a sister can risk herself to recuperate a pining sister. Gender politics in the Victorian market economy, commodification of female body, female sexuality, temptation and fall and recuperation with the love of a sister give the poem a feminist and Biblical touch. Lizzie is the emblem of the 'New Woman' who carries a silver to the market to buy fruits that would save her sister Laura. In spite of being harassed and bulldozed by the goblin men for her daring, which is but a symbol of molestation; Lizzie at the end is married and becomes a mother:

> Days, weeks, months, years.
>
> Afterwards, when both were wives,
>
> With children of their own,…

Christina Rossetti's sonnet sequence *Monna Innominata*: *A Sonnet on Sonnets and Other Life* counters her brother Dante Gabriel's *The House of Life* in challenging the image of a woman that patriarchy constructs. Rossetti employs a more empowered speaker who idealizes her beloved instead of being idealized by him as traditional sonnets do. Her *The Prince's Progress and Other Poems* (1866) contains poems like 'The Prince's Progress', 'Maiden Song', 'Spring Quiet', 'A Portrait', 'The Poor Ghost', 'Dream Love', 'Songs in a Cornfield', 'Light Love' and devotional poems like 'Long Barren', 'If Only', 'Despised and Rejected', 'Weary in Well Doing' and so on. Her devotional poems speak of

her Faith in God, who has borne a 'crown of thorn' for her, that triumphs over the pervading pessimism. For all the politics of gender that visibly pervaded the literary scene and even excluded Christina Rossetti from the Brotherhood of pre-Raphaelite poets, her poetry cannot be seen in isolation from the "Pre-Raphaelite" creed. Her hallmarks in this regard are the rich and precise natural details, mature and decided use of symbols, the poignancy of her verse, and its deliberate medievalism. She continued to write and in the 1870s to work for the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. She was troubled physically by neuralgia and emotionally by Dante's breakdown in 1872. The last 12 years of her life, after his death in 1882, were outwardly quiet ones. She died of cancer on December 29, 1894.

6.4 LET'S SUM UP

In this unit we have studied so far:

- Early and Later poets of the Victorian period.
- Life and works of these poets.
- How their time shape their art.
- Their chief qualities as a poet.
- Impact of their creation during Victorian period.
- How the women writers expressed their role and place in the society.

6.5 QUESTIONS

1- Do the works of the late Victorian poets anticipate the Modernism?

2- How is the female identity manifested in the women's poetry?

3- How do Tennyson and Browning, in diverse ways, manifest their times?

4- Write a note on awakening of Medievalist ethos in the Victorian Age?

5- How does Amy Levy present love in her poetry?

6.6 FURTHER READINGS

- A.C. Baugh, Literary History of England. Vol. IV.
- Joseph Bristow (Ed.), The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Poetry.
- The Cambridge Introduction to Victorian Poetry.
- G.M. Young, "Victorian England: Portrait of an Age".
- A Short History of English Literature by Ifor Evans.

UNIT-7 MAJOR VICTORIAN NOVELISTS

Structure

7.0 OBJECTIVES

After completing this unit you will be able to:

- Know about different novel writers of the Victorian Age.
- Know why the novel in particular became the chief medium of expression during the period.
- Know what topics were there for discussion in the novel of that time.
- Analyse how the social and political milieu influenced the creation of novel writers of the Age.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Though the eighteenth century saw the birth of novel, but it is only in the nineteenth century that the novel as a genre reached a certain height which was not earlier trespassed. The Victorian age is essentially the age of novel. During this period novel made a phenomenal progress. The rapid growth of Victorian fiction can be attributed to different factors—social, cultural and literary. In the early Victorian period the novel made a rapid progress. Novel-reading was one of the chief occupations of the educated public, and material had to be found for every taste. The result was that the scope of the novel, which during the eighteenth century dealt mainly with contemporary life and manners, was considerably enlarged. A number of brilliant novelists showed that it was possible to adapt the novel to almost all purposes of literature whatsoever. In most of the cases the major Victorian novelists intended to satisfy the ethical and aesthetic demands of the contemporary middle classes. The middle

class preference for prose fiction as the source of diversion and edification was also determined by various journals and literary magazines that patronised the serial publications of novels on a regular basis to increase their sale and circulation among the educated section of middle classes.

7.2 MAJOR VICTORIAN NOVELISTS

We are well aware of the fact that the growth of the novel was dependent on the growth of the middle class, as today we see the novel to be the most popular genre as the major part of the world's middle class is interested in this genre of literature. The Victorian novel is the revelation of the most typical product of English genius. In fact, the novel occupies the same place in Victorian age, which drama established its unique reputation in the age of Queen Elizabeth I. David Daiches' comments seems to be apt here, as he says, "The Nineteenth Century was the great age of the English novel."

7.2.1 Charles Dickens

In the nineteenth-century novel Charles Dickens (1812-70) is pre-eminent. In most ways he is the greatest novelist that England has yet produced. Charles Dickens started from the humblest position in life. In 1827 he entered the office of an attorney and got an appointment as reporter on *The True Sun* and later on *The Morning Chronicle*. He made his debut as a writer with *Sketches by* Boz (articles) which appeared in The Monthly Magazine in 1833. They were brilliantly written and were published in two volumes in 1836. In his early novels, *Pickwick Papers* (1837) and *Nicholas Nickleby* for instance, Dickens followed the tradition of Smollett. Like Smollett's novels they are mere bundles of adventure connected by means of character who figure in them. In his *Martin* Chuzzlewit (1843), and *David Copperfield* he made some effort towards unifications but even here the plots are loose. It was in *Bleak House* (1852-53) that he succeeded in gathering up all the diverse threads of the story in a systematic and coherent plot. His later novels - *Little Dorrit* (1855-57), *A Tale of Two Cities* (1864-65), and the unfinished *Edwin Drood* - were also like *Bleak House* systematically planned. But, on the whole Dickens was not every successful in building up his plots, and there is in all of them a great deal of mere episodical material. His novels are full of pathos, and there are many passages of studied and extravagant sentiment. But Dickens's sentimentalism, for which he is often blamed, is a phase of his idealism. Like a true idealist Dickens seeks to embody in his art the inner life of man with a direct or implied moral. The best example of Dickens's idealism is found in *A Tale of Two Cities*, where he preaches a sermon on the sublime text: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Oliver Twist (1837) appeared piecemeal in Bentley's Miscellany, and *Nicholas Nickleby* came out in 1838. Dickens became immensely popular and his novels were in great demand. As a journalist he edited *The Daily News* (1846) and founded *Household Words* (1849) and *All the Year Round* (1859). *The Old Curiosity Shop* which appeared in 1840 was an immense success, and *Barnaby Rudge* (1841), was a historical novel. His American experiences are described in *American Notes* (1842) and *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843). Then followed *A Christmas Carol* (1843) and *Dombey and Son* (1846). Dickens' famous autobiographical novel *David Copperfield* appeared in 1849. His other famous novels are *Bleak House* (1842), *Hard Times* (1854), *A Tale of Two Cities, Great Expectations* (1860) and *Our Mutual Friend*. Dickens did not live to finish The *Mystery of Edwin Drood*, as he died in 1870. Dickens is in fact a realist. It was Dickens's realism which came as a check to medievalism which was very popular during the Romantic period. He awakened the interest of the public in the social conditions of England. The novels of Dickens were full of personal experiences (like Oliver Twist), anecdotes, stories from friends, and statistics to show that they were founded upon facts. The result was that after Dickens began writing, knights and ladies and tournaments became rarer in the English novel. They were replaced by agricultural labourers, miners, tailors and paupers. Chesterton says: "Dickens used reality while aiming at an effect of romance, while Thackeray used the loose language and ordinary appearance of romance while aiming at an effect of reality... Dickens writes

realism in order the incredible credible." Dickens' power of minute and keen observation coupled with poetic imagination, retentive memory and remarkable instinctive power of reading character make him a realist of a high order.

7.2.2 Charles Kingsley (1819-75)

Charles Kingsley, born on 12 June, 1819 at Holne Vicarage near Dartmoor, went to Magdalene College, Cambridge, where he graduated with a first class in classics and a second in mathematics. In the year 1848, Charles Kingsley published the blank verse drama, *The Saint's Tragedy*. Charles Kingsley then joined the newly established Queen's College, London as a professor, but soon was forced to resign because of the work pressure. In 1948, Kingsley published a long story by the name of *Yeast; a Problem* which dealt with the deplorable living conditions of England's agricultural laboring families. The story started appearing in Fraser's Magazine and later was published as a book in 1851. By then, Charles Kingsley's political activism was widely known throughout London and in consequence, there was an adverse reaction by the establishment which resulted in his rejection for a professorship at King's College. Charles Kingsley was appalled by the heinous sanitary conditions in Victorian cities. Because of the rise of the Industrial cities, many a people from the rural areas had migrated to the cities making city life crowded. The cities were not equipped with this inflow of population and therefore the sanitary conditions of the cities were in a bad shape. Charles Kingsley saw these and was horrified by it leading him to write about it in his novel *Alton Locke* (1859).

Charles Kingsley published his first historical novel, *Hypatia: or, New Foes with an Old Face*, in two volumes; it had earlier appeared serially in Fraser's Magazine in 1853. It deals with the fifth-century Alexandria, which presents the story of various conflicts of Greeks, Jews, Romans, Egyptians, and Goths, particularly the rival claims of Christianity, Judaism, and Neoplatonic thought, against the background of the collapsing Roman Empire. *Glaucus*; *or, The Wonders of the Shore* was published in1855 which was his first book specifically meant for children. In 1854 the Kingsleys moved to Biddeford on the north coast of Devon, where Kingsley wrote his historical romance *Westward Ho!* for which he is still known throughout the world. It is the most widely read of all his novels. In 1868 Charles Kingsley published *The Heroes; or Greek Fairy Tales, for My Children,* a book of three Greek legends, intended specifically for children. Thus, his fame for a writer for the children was established with this book as he knew how to appeal to the sensibilities of his child readers. Then came another novel for adults, *Two Years Ago* which was published in 1857. The novel *Two Years Ago* is set in the Victorian age, in which Kingsley expressed his views on topics such as the role of the artist as a greater good for the society at large, the great need for sanitation in the cities so as to maintain hygiene, the importance of science in the contemporary life as well as the abolition of slavery. In 1863, Charles Kingsley's another well-known work for children came out as *The Water-Babies*. The book was serialised in Macmillan's Magazine dealing with the story of little Tom, the poor child chimney sweep who, reborn as a water-baby, experiences wonderful adventures in the company of real and imaginary creatures.

7.2.3 William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863)

Thackeray was born in Calcutta, British India in 1811, and was sent to England after his father's death in 1815. He studied at various schools and briefly attended Trinity College, Cambridge, before leaving to travel Europe. Thackeray squandered much of his inheritance on gambling and unsuccessful newspapers. He turned to journalism to support his family, primarily working for Fraser's Magazine, The Times, and Punch. His wife Isabella suffered from mental illness, leaving Thackeray a de facto widower.

Thackeray who was Dickens's contemporary and great rival for popular favour, lacked his weaknesses and his genius. He was more interested in the manners and morals of the aristocracy than

in the great upheavals of the age. Thackeray is, first of all, a realist, who paints life as he sees it. As he says of himself, "I have no brains above my eyes; I describe what I see." He gives in his novels accurate and true picture especially of the vicious elements of society. As he possesses an excessive sensibility, and a capacity for fine feelings and emotions like Dickens, he is readily offended by shams, falsehood and hypocrisy in society. The result is that he satirises them. But his satire is always tempered by kindness and humour. Moreover, besides being a realist and satirist, Thackeray is also a moralist. In all his novels he definitely aims at creating a moral impression and he often behaves in an inartistic manner by explaining and emphasising the moral significance of work. The beauty of virtue and the ugliness of vice in his character is so obvious on every page that we do not have to consult our conscience over their actions. But the quality of which Thackeray is most remembered as a novelist is the creation of living characters.

Thackeray's writing include satiric humorous studies of London manners, i.e. *The Yellowplush Correspondence* (1837 - 1838), the memoirs and diary of a young cockney footman written in his own vocabulary and style; *Major Gahagan* (1838 - 1839), a fantasy of soldiering in India; *Catherine* (1839 - 1840), a burlesque of the popular "Newgate novels" of romanticised crime and low life and so on. The parodies and satirical writing laid the foundation of his later career as a novelist, since in his works of prose fiction he showed his fondness for ironical and satirical presentation of characters and situations with the definite strain of humour and parody. His first major novel is *Vanity Fair* (1848), followed by *Pendennis* (1850), *The Newcomes* (1853-55), *The Virginians* (1859) and *Esmond* (1852). It is in *Vanity Fair* that Thackeray reaches the maturity of his literary art and the critics consider that it expresses the strong social consciousness of the writer. The narrative of Vanity Fair gives an unusual perspective of the Napoleonic Wars covers historically a long stretch of time beginning with the Battle of Waterloo (1815) and ending with the enactment of the First Reform Bill (1832). The source of the main title is directly taken from Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress,* while the sub-title "A novel without a hero" primarily draws the attention of the readers to Becky Sharp, the central protagonist who appears to be constantly throwing a challenge to the long- cherished social and moral values of a male-dominated society, mainly governed by the spirit of cash-nexus, and social snobbery. *Pendennis* traces the career of Arthur Pendennis: his first love affair, his experiences at "Oxbridge University," his employment as a London journalist, and so on. *The Newcomes,* ostensibly tracing the lives of Colonel Newcome and his generations, focuses on marriage for the sake of money. Capitalism and Methodism have been dealt with. *The Virginians* tells the story of Henry Esmond and his two grandsons and, with the temporal reference being the American war of Independence and circumstances of lives centering it. In all these novels Thackeray has presented life in a most realistic manner. Every act, every scene, every person in his novels is real with a reality which has been idealised up to, and not beyond, the necessities of literature. Whatever the acts, the scenes and the personages may be in his novels, we are always face to face with real life, and it is there that the greatness of Thackeray as a novelist lies.

7.2.4 Charles Reade (1814 - 1884)

The English novelist and playwright Charles Reade was a contemporary of Charles Dickens. Like Dickens, he often wrote of the social evils of the time. Charles Reade was born on June 8, 1814, at Ipsden, Oxfordshire, to John Reade and Anne Marie Scott-Waring, and had four brothers. He studied at Magdalen College, Oxford, taking his B.A. in 1835, and became a fellow of his college. He was subsequently dean of arts and vice-president, taking his degree of D.C.L. in 1847. His name was entered at Lincoln's Inn in 1836; he was elected Vinerian Fellow in 1842, and was called to the bar in 1843. In 1835 he was awarded a fellowship at the college that brought him a small income for the rest of his life. Although this forced him to maintain ties with Magdalen, which he disliked, he lived mainly in London. Finally, in 1849 he embarked on a long career as a dramatist, theatre manager, and novelist. Laura Seymour, an actress, lived with him from 1856 until her death in 1879. Reade's novels reveal his concern with social issues. *It Is Never Too Late to Mend* (1856) attacked conditions in prisons,

and *Hard Cash* (1863) exposed the ill-treatment of mental patients, especially in private asylums; *Put Yourself in His Place* (1870) dealt with the coercive activities of trade unionists. *Foul Play* (1868), written with Dion Boucicault, revealed the frauds of "coffin ships" (unseaworthy and overloaded ships, often heavily insured by unscrupulous owners) and helped to sway public opinion in favour of the safety measures proposed later by Samuel Plimsoll; like many of Reade's fictions, it had a dual identity as novel and play. The historical novel *Griffith Gaunt* (1866) was widely attacked for its sexual frankness. In an effort to increase the realism in his novels, Reade loaded or as his critics complained, overloaded - them with carefully researched detail.

7.2.5 George Eliot (1819-1880)

The real name of George Eliot was Mary Ann Evans. Her novels, most famously 'Middlemarch', are celebrated for their realism and psychological insights. George Eliot was born on 22 November 1819 in rural Warwickshire. In 1850, Eliot began contributing to the 'Westminster Review', a leading journal for philosophical radicals, and later became its editor. She was now at the centre of a literary circle through which she met George Henry Lewes, with whom she lived until his death in 1878. Lewes encouraged Eliot to write. In 1856, she began 'Scenes of Clerical Life', stories about the people of her native Warwickshire, which were published in 'Blackwood's Magazine'. Her first novel, 'Adam Bede', followed in 1859 and was a great success. She used a male pen name to ensure that her works were taken seriously in an era when female authors were usually associated with romantic novels. Mary Ann Evans imparted moral and philosophical dimension to English novel. Her first work consisted of three short stories, published in Blackwood's Magazine during 1857. These stories deal with the tragedy of ordinary lives, unfolded with an intense sympathy and deep insight into the truth of character.

George Eliot was an intellectual writer and like Meredith was interested in the revelation of the inner life or her characters. Her other novels- *The Mill on the Floss* (1890); *Silas Marner* (1861); *Romola* (1863); *Middlemarch* (1873) ; and *Daniel Deronda* (1876), reveal her interest in the finding of contemporary science, particularly heredity, which appeared as a scientific determinism. In her novels plot in the old sense of something external to character and often working unknown to it becomes irrelevant and unnecessary. And one of the signs of this new importance of characters in her relentless and scrupulous analysis of them: when we meet Dorothea, Casaubon, and Lydgate (in Middlemarch), we realise that it is the very thoroughness and intensity of her analysis which creates them. This is something new in English fiction, which later novelists such as Gissing and Henry James, Conrad and Lawrence, were to take up. It is indeed precisely here that her essential, modernity lies.

All the novels of George Eliot are examples of psychological realism. She represents in them, like Browning in his poetry, the inner struggle of a soul, and reveals the motives, impulses and hereditary influences which govern human action. But unlike Browning who generally stops short when he tells a story, and either lets the reader draw his own conclusion or gives his in a few striking lines, George Eliot is not content until she has minutely explained the motives of her characters and the moral lessons to be learned from them. Moreover, the characters in her novels, unlike in the novels of Dickens, develop gradually as we came to know them. They go from weakness to strength or from strength to weakness, according to the works that they do and the thoughts that they cherish. For instance, in Romola we find that Tito degenerates steadily because he follows selfish impulses, while Romola grows into beauty and strength with every act of self-renunciation.

7.2.6 George Meredith (1829-1909)

Another great figure not only in fiction, but in the general field of literature during the Victorian period, was Meredith who, though a poet at heart expressed himself in the medium of the novel, which was becoming more and more popular. The work of Meredith as a novelist stands apart from fiction

of the century. He did not follow any established tradition, nor did he found a school. In fact he was more of a poet and philosopher than a novelist. He confined himself principally to the upper classes of society, and his attitude to life is that of the thinker and poet. In his novels, he cared little for incident or plot on their account, but used them principally to illustrate the activity of the 'Comic Spirit'.

Meredith was educated in Germany, and his writings were influenced by the Germans, especially the novelist Jean Paul Richter (1763-1825) who stimulated his concept of comedy. His first attempt in fiction was *The Shaping of Shagpat*, a pleasant oriental tale. His well-known novels are *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* (1859), *Evan Harrington* (1861), *Sandra Belloni* (1864), *Rhoda Fleming* (1865), *Vittoria* (1867), *Harry Richmond* (1871), *Beauchamps Career* (1876), *The Egoist* (1879) and *Diana of the Crossways* (1855). *Richard Feverel* is one of his memorable works. *The Adventures of Harry Richmond* is also believed to be autobiographical. *The Egoist* is his masterpiece. *The Ordeal of Richard Feveral,* which is one of the earliest of Meredith's novels, is also one of his best. Its theme is the ill-advised bringing up of an only son, Richard Feveral, by his well-meaning and officious father, Sir Austen Feveral. In spite of his best intentions, the father adopts such methods as are unsuited to the nature of the boy, with the result that he himself becomes the worst enemy of his son, and thus an object of ridicule by the Comic Spirit. Besides containing Meredith's philosophy of natural and healthy development of the human personality the novel also has some fines passages of great poetic beauty. *Evan Harrington* is full of humorous situations which arise out of the social snobbery of the Harrington family. *Rhoda Fleming, Sandra Belloni, Harry Richmond* and *Beauchamp's Career* all contain the best qualities of Meredith's art - intellectual brilliance, a ruthless exposure of social weaknesses, and an occasional poetic intensity of style. In all of them Meredith shows himself as the enemy of sentimentality. In *The Egoists* which is the most perfect illustration of what he meant by 'comedy', Meredith reached the climax of his art. The complete discomfiture of Sir Willoughby Patterne, the egoist, is one of the neatest things in English literature. This novel also contains Meredith's some of the best drawn characters—the Egoist himself, Clara Middleton, Laetitia Dale, and Crossjay Patterne.

7.2.7 Mrs. Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell (1810-65)

Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell often referred to as Mrs. Gaskell, was an English novelist, biographer, and short story writer. Her novels offer a detailed portrait of the lives of many strata of Victorian society, including the very poor. Gaskell was born Elizabeth Cleghorn Stevenson on 29 September 1810 in Lindsey Row, Chelsea, London. The doctor who delivered her was Anthony Todd Thomson, whose sister Catherine later became Gaskell's stepmother. She was the youngest of eight children; only she and her brother John survived infancy. Her father, William Stevenson, a Unitarian from Berwick-upon-Tweed, was minister at Failsworth, Lancashire, but resigned his orders on conscientious grounds. He moved to London in 1806 on the understanding that he would be appointed private secretary to the Earl of Lauderdale, who was to become Governor General of India. That position did not materialise, however, and Stevenson was nominated Keeper of the Treasury Records. His wife, Elizabeth Holland, came from a family established in Lancashire and Cheshire that was connected with other prominent Unitarian families, including the Wedgwoods, the Martineaus, the Turners and the Darwins. When she died 13 months after giving birth to Gaskell, her husband sent the baby to live with Elizabeth's sister, Hannah Lumb, in Knutsford, Cheshire.

Mrs. Gaskell used novel as an instrument of social reform. In her first novel *Mary Barton* (1848), she presents a sociological study based on her experience of the conditions of the labouring classes in the new cities of the industrial North. It is remarkable for passionate sympathy for the downtrodden. *North and South* (1855) is a better constructed novel than its predecessor but it is also a Sociological novel. Her next novel, *Sylvia's Lovers* (1863) is a moralistic love story in a domestic setting. *Wives and Daughters,* her last unfinished novel, is an ironical study of snobbishness, and is noticeable for the fine delineation of female characters - Mrs. Gibson, Molly Gibson and Cynthia

Kirpatrick. Mrs. Gaskell's most celebrated work is *Cranford* (1853). It is less a novel than a series of papers in the manner of The Spectator.

7.2.8 The Brontë sisters (1816 - 1855)

Edward Elbert writes about these Bronte Sisters - Charlotte (1816-55), Emily (1818-48) and Anne (1820-49), that, "they were the pioneers in fiction of that aspect of the romantic movement which concerned itself with the baring of human soul. In place of the detached observation of a society or group of people, such as we find in Jane Austen and the earlier novelists, the Brontës painted the sufferings of an individual personality, and presented the new conception of the heroine as a woman of vital strength and passionate feelings. Their works are as much the products of imagination and emotions as of the intellect, and in their more powerful passages they border on poetry."

Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855) wrote the following novels- *The Professor* (posthumous publication in 1849), *Jane Eyre* (1847), *Shirley* (1849) and *Villette* (1853). In *Jane Eyre*, figure of the heroine Jane Eyre, appointed a governess in the household of Mr. Rochester, a widower with the mad woman in the attic with her horrifying and shocking presence provides the ideal setting for an extraordinary love story, since the attitude of the Jane towards Mr. Rochester tentatively moves between love and hatred, sympathy and antipathy, fascination and repulsion. Written in the first person narrative technique, the novel seems to present Jane as opposing the Victorian patriarchy, but finally succumbing to the conventional values of the society. This is suggested by confident self- declaration; "Reader, I married him."

Emily Brontë (1818-48)'s *Wuthering Heights* (1847) has always been regarded as one of the most singular and isolated among English novels. The novel with the perceptible prance of the Gothic Fiction is its background and story elements depict the gender-relationship in the most convincing style. The social context of the novel is as complex as the human context. The novel tells the story of human relationship between Heathcliff and Catherine (Cathy), the daughter of Mr. Earnshaw, the foster-father of Heathcliff, originally an orphan of the slams of Liverpool. The lovers in their relationship are sometimes violently passionate, sometimes moderately romantic, but never indifferent to each other. The class-consciousness of the Victorian bourgeoisie is presented in the relationship between the members of the Earnshaw family and the social marginals, represented by the young Heathcliff. Wuthering Heights is further remarkable for its nature background. Heath itself is as stormy and violent as the human passion. Emily Bronte's attempt to synchronise between man and nature anticipates Hardy's and D.H. Lawrence's treatment of nature. The narrative strategy, adopted by Emily Bronte, is as innovative and experimental as any modern novel. The polyphonic voices (the multiple voices) of different characters are heard throughout the narrative. These voices have their self- entity, although at the same time they sometimes converge, and sometimes mingle with one another.

Anne Brontë (1820-1849) was at once a novelist and a poet. Under the pseudonym of Aston Bell she contributed to the volumes of poems by all three sisters. Her two novels are *Agnes Grey* (1847) and *The Tenant of the Wildfell Hall* which are the books of some distinction, but they are not on the same level of importance as the works of her two sisters.

7.2.9 Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)

Thomas Hardy is one of the major literary figures of the Victorian era. He has tried his hands at novels, poetry, short stories and drama. But he is primarily remembered for his highly pessimistic and soul-stirring tragic novels. He was mourned as "the last of the great Victorian." Hardy was born on June 2, 1840, at "Higher Bock-Hampton, Dorset, a small hamlet in Dorsetshire near Dorchester. This was a small town largely inhabited by working men and agricultural people. His father was also named Thomas Hardy, who was a master mason and also a gifted violinist and musician. His mother, Jemima Hardy was a cook for a local clergyman before marriage. She was also an accomplished

musician. She was the main reason behind Hardy's early education. She made him read Dryden's Virgil, Johnson's Rasselas, and a popular illustrated history of the Napoleonic wars. He never felt at home in London, because he was acutely conscious of class divisions and his social inferiority. In 1867, he returned to Bockhampton because of his ill health and broke his engagement with Eliza Nicholls. In 1870, during a mission to restore the Parish Church of St. Juliot in Cornwall, Hardy met and fell in love with Emma Lavinia Gifford. He married her in 1874. Emma died on November 27, 1912. In 1914, he married Florence Emily Dugdale, who was 39 years his junior. He remained preoccupied with his first wife's death and tried to overcome his remorse by writing poetry. Hardy became ill with Pleurisy in December 1927, and died at Max Gate (former home of Thomas Hardy) on 11 Jan. 1928. His body was cremated and buried in Westminster Abbey(The Poet's Corner), but as he wished, his heart was removed and buried in his Parish Churchyard at Stinsford in the grave of his true love and wife Emma. His well-known novels include: *Desperate Remedies* (1871), *Under the Green Wood Tree, or The Mellstock Quire* (1872), *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873), Hardy's first novel published under his name, *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),*The Well-Beloved* (1892), reissued in 1897 and *Jude the Obscure* (1895).

Hardy's novels are set in "Wessex", but his characters are no longer masters of their fates. They are exposed to the indifferent forces that determine human destiny. Hardy's pessimism is quite apparent in his works. Unlike the high Victorians who were concerned with people in society, Hardy studies the elemental forces of human behaviour. For instance, Tess of D'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman, is the story of Tess, an innocent young girl seduced by the vulgar Alec D'Urberville, later rejected by her love and suitor (husband) Angel Clare for her 'fallen' state, finally driven to murder and consequently being hanged. The main contribution of Hardy to the history of the English novel was that he made it as serious a medium as poetry, which could deal with the fundamental problems of life. His novels can be favorably compared to great poetic tragedies, and the characters therein rise to great tragic heights. His greatest quality as a writer is his sincerity and his innate sympathy for the poor and the down-trodden. If at times he transgressed the limits of art, it was mainly on account of his deep compassion for mankind, especially those belonging to the lower stratum.

7.2.10 Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881)

Benjamin Disraeli was born in London of a Jewish family. He studied law at Lincoln's Inn but early showed his interest in literature. After the success of his first novel he spent three years making the Grand Tour of Europe, returning to England in 1831. In 1837, at the fifth attempt, he succeeded in gaining a seat in Parliament as member for Maidstone. Ten years later he was leader of the Tories in the Commons, and he became Prime Minister in 1868 and again in 1870. He was raised to the peerage in 1876 and died in 1881 after a short illness. He began his literary career as a novelist. *Vivian Grey* (1826-27) soon set the fashionable world talking of its author. It dealt with fashionable society, it was brilliant and witty, and it had an easy arrogance that amused, incensed, and attracted at the same time. His next novel was *The Voyage of Captain Popanilla* (1828), a modern Gulliver's Travels. The wit is very incisive, and the satire, though it lacks the solid weight of Swift's, is sure and keen. Disraeli wrote a good number of other novels, the most notable of which were Contarini Fleming; *A Psychological Autobiography* (1832), *Henrietta Temple* (1837), *Coningsby: or the New Generation* (1844), *Sybil: or The Two Nations* (1845), and *Tancred: or the New Crusade* (1847). These last books, written when experience of public affairs had added depth to his vision and edge to his satire, are polished and powerful novels dealing with the politics of his day. Disraeli was among the first to point out that the amelioration of the wretched lot of the working class was a social duty of the aristocracy. Being a politician who became the Prime Minister of England, he has given us the finest study of the movements of English politics under Queen Victoria. All his novels are written with a

purpose, and as the characters in them are created with a view to the thesis, they retain a certain air of unreality.

7.2.11 Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894)

Robert Louis Stevenson was born at Edinburgh, and was called to the Scottish Bar. He had little taste for the legal profession, and a constitutional tendency to consumption made an outdoor life necessary. He travelled much in an erratic manner, and wrote for periodicals. Then, when his malady became acute, he migrated to Samoa (1888), where the mildness of the climate only delayed a death which came all too prematurely. He lies buried in Samoa. He was a great story-teller and romancer. He took advantage of the reader's demand for shorter novels. His first romance entitled *Treasure Island* (1883), became very popular. It was followed by *The New Arabian Nights* (1882), *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), *Kidnapped* (1886), *The Black Arrow* (1888), which contain romances and mystery stories. In *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* he departed from his usual manner to write a modern allegory of the good and evil in the human personality. In *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889) Stevenson described the story of a soul condemned to evil. At his death he was working on unfinished novel, *Weir of Hermiston*, which is considered by some critics as the most finished product of his whole work. In it he dramatised the conflict between father and son - the Lord Justice-Clerk, the hanging judge, and his son Archie who has the courage to face him. The contribution of Stevenson to the English novel is that he introduced into it romantic adventure. His rediscovery of the art of narrative, of conscious and clever calculation in telling a story so that the maximum effect of clarity and suspense is achieved, meant the birth of the novel of action. He gave a wholly new literary dignity and impetus to light fiction whose main aim is entertainment.

7.3 LET'S SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed major novelists of the Victorian era whose works made the novel the most powerful medium of expression in the Age. Several novelists imparted their genius to elevate the novel to the uttermost height. One thing is very clear that almost all writers showed the social evils of the day, political condition and the subjugation of women especially by women writers in their writings. Victorian novelists portrayed the outside world and some of them, especially Charles Dickens were great realists which takes a turn to the inner realms of human existence in the next century, the modern age. Some writers like Hardy presents a gloomy view of the world. In his views present setting of the world has left a man helpless and in a dilemma where he is not the master of his fate. Mighty powers above him are against him and always make fun of his orderly plan for living.

7.4 QUESTIONS

- Why did the novel emerge as the most powerful medium of expression during the Victorian Age?
- What are the main themes in the novels of Charles Dickens?
- What are the general characteristics of Hardy's novels?
- How Disraeli depicts the weaker sections in his novels?
- What are the general characteristics of George Eliot's novels?
- Write a critical note evaluating the contribution of the Victorian novelists.

7.5 FURTHER READINGS

- History of English Literature by Edward Albert.
- History of English Literature by William J. Long.

- A Short History of English Literature by Ifor Evans.
- Jashodhara Bagchi (Ed): Literature, Society and Ideology in the Victorian Era.
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Unit- 8 IMPORTANT LITERARY TRENDS AND TEXTS

Structure

8.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- Know about different trends in poetry, prose, fiction and drama.
- Analyse how the different writers use these trends in their works.
- Understand how the social, political and cultural predicament of the Victorian age forced writers to deviate from preceding literary trends.
- Analyse how the writers of the Victorian age expressed their thoughts through new trends in literature.

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The Victorian Age witnessed a spurt in literature. While the preceding age was predominantly an age of poetry, the Victorian Age in British Literature produced great novels, prose and poetry. In drama there was very little contribution. In 1859 a new influence came into the literary and social life of the day – Natural Science. Charles Darwin published his' Origin of Species' and it started a new era. Poetry and fiction were influenced with the new spirit of scientific observation and philosophic analysis which can be seen in the works of – George Eliot, Matthew Arnold, Clough, Huxley and Browning. Darwin claimed, through proof, that man's first parents were not Adam and Eve but the Ape. That man had evolved slowly, over the centuries from the Ape. This led to a lot of bitterness and confusion. In fact, confusion is one of the marked characteristic of the Victorian Age. Loss of faith, confusion and melancholy can be seen in the works of Tennyson, Clough and Arnold. Victorian England then was a society in the throes of change and all this is reflected in the literature of the age – the rise of democratic ideals and the progress of scientific thought. Democratic ideals led to equal educational opportunities for all and this led to the development of journalism and periodical literature. Many new journals came up and many more people took it up as a livelihood. The progress of science changed man's outlook on life. It aroused in him restlessness and also a questioning spirit. He started questioning things he had accepted till now. Society had become more materialistic and so life too had become more commercialized. Wordsworth laments it in "The world is too much with us "-man does

not have time to enjoy himself. He is too busy making money. The restlessness and questioning note can be seen in the literature of the times, in Arthur Clough, in the pessimism of James Thomson, in the wistful melancholy of Arnold—all this was the result of loss of faith. It did not kill poetry but for some time the impulse was subdued. The positive side of science can be seen in the works of Tennyson. With scientific accuracy he gave detailed pictures of nature in all her beauty. In short, Victorian literature was a faithful representation of the age.

8.2 TRENDS IN THE VICTORIAN LITERATURE

Although during the Victorian age every form of literature abounded, from pure romance to gross realism, struggle for expression, it is emphatically an age of prose. With the spread of popular education the number of readers increased and the novel which is the pleasantest form of literary entertainment as well as the most successful method of presenting modern problems, came to occupy the same place which drama held in the days of Elizabeth. According to W. J. Long: "...never before, in any age or language, has the novel appeared in such numbers and in such perfection."

Almost all the major writers of the age are moralists. The Victorian literature, therefore, both in prose and poetry, seems to depart from the purely artistic standard of art for art's sake, and to be actuated by a definite moral purpose. Tennyson, Browning, Carlyle. Ruskin-all believe in the ideal of art for life's sake and seek to uplift and instruct humanity through their writings. Even the novel breaks away from Scott's romantic influence, and first studies life as it is, and then points out what life may and ought to be.

Though it is somewhat customary to speak of this age as an age of doubt and pessimism lacking in great ideals, spiritual and ethical impulse is markedly dominant in the writers, whether they be poets, novelists, or essayists. "The conspicuous quality of literature between 1830 and 1880 is the quality of nobleness", writers O. Elton, Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, Ruskin, Newman, and Carlyle-all exhibit in their writings nobility of tone and outlook, concern with grave and serious issues of life. The Victorian era, spanning from 1837 to 1901, was a period of remarkable literary output and innovation. Several key trends emerged during this time, shaping the literary landscape and influencing generations of writers to come.

8.2.1 Trends in the Victorian Novel

The novel reached its zenith during the Victorian era, with authors experimenting with form, style, and subject matter. This section will explore the various types of novels that emerged and flourished during this period.

The Realistic Novels

One of the most significant trends in Victorian literature was the rise of realism. Authors sought to depict life as it truly was, moving away from the romanticized ideals of the previous era. This trend was characterized by: Detailed descriptions of everyday life and settings, Complex, multifaceted characters with psychological depth, Exploration of social issues and class struggles, Use of regional dialects and colloquialisms. Notable authors of this mode included George Eliot, Charles Dickens, and Thomas Hardy. Eliot's "Middlemarch" (1871-1872) is often considered the pinnacle of realist fiction, offering a panoramic view of provincial life and intricate character studies.

The Social Novels

Victorian literature often served as a vehicle for social critique. Writers used their works to expose societal ills and injustices, challenge class divisions and inequality, address issues of industrialization and urbanization, question traditional moral values and religious beliefs. Charles Dickens was particularly known for his social commentary, with novels like "Oliver Twist" (1837-1839) and "Hard

Times" (1854) shining a light on poverty, child labour, and the harsh realities of industrial England and criticizes the dehumanizing effects of industrialization and utilitarianism. The social novel, also known as the industrial novel or condition-of-England novel, was a prominent genre that addressed the social and economic problems of the industrial age. Some more notable works in this type of fiction are, "North and South" (1854-1855) by Elizabeth Gaskell, which contrasts life in industrial northern England with the genteel south and explores labour relations and class divisions. "Mary Barton" (1848) by Elizabeth Gaskell focusses on the struggles of working-class families in Manchester and addresses issues of trade unionism and class conflict.

The Serialized Novels

The rise of serialized fiction was a defining trend of the Victorian era. Many novels were initially published in installments in periodicals before being released as complete books. This format made literature more accessible to a wider audience, influenced narrative structure with authors creating cliffhangers and suspenseful plot elements, allowed for reader feedback to shape ongoing narratives. Wilkie Collins' "The Woman in White" (1859-1860) and Charles Dickens' "Great Expectations" (1860-1861) are prime examples of successful serialized novels. Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White* pioneered the mystery and detective fiction genres, and uses multiple narrators to create suspense and ambiguity. "Lady Audley's Secret" (1862) by Mary Elizabeth Braddon challenges Victorian ideals of femininity and incorporates elements of crime and psychological instability. "East Lynne" (1861) by Mrs. Henry Wood explores themes of adultery and double identity and became one of the bestselling novels of the 19th century.

The Gothic Novels

While realism dominated, there was also a resurgence of Gothic elements in Victorian literature. This trend was characterized by atmospheric settings and supernatural elements, exploration of psychological terror and the uncanny, blending of romance and horror. The Brontë sisters were key figures in this revival, with Emily Brontë's "Wuthering Heights" (1847), which combines Gothic elements with a complex narrative structure and explores themes of passion, revenge, and the supernatural. Charlotte Brontë's "Jane Eyre" (1847) incorporating Gothic elements into their narratives. "Dracula" (1897) by Bram Stoker. It reimagines vampire folklore for the Victorian age and addresses anxieties about sexuality, immigration, and modernity. "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" (1886) by Robert Louis Stevenson. It shows the duality of human nature and uses Gothic elements to address Victorian concerns about morality and science

Expansion of the Novel Form

The Bildungsroman

The Victorian era saw significant innovations in the novel form, including development of the bildungsroman (coming-of-age story), rise of the sensation novel, combining elements of domestic realism and Gothic romance and emergence of detective fiction as a distinct genre. Charles Dickens' "David Copperfield" (1849-1850) exemplifies the bildungsroman, while Wilkie Collins' "The Moonstone" (1868) is considered one of the first detective novels.

The bildungsroman, or coming-of-age novel, traced the moral and psychological growth of a protagonist from youth to adulthood. This type focuses on character development and self-discovery, often included elements of social critique, explored themes of education, identity, and moral growth. Notable works in this field are: "Jane Eyre" (1847) by Charlotte Brontë. It chronicles the emotional and moral development of its titular character, combines elements of the bildungsroman with Gothic romance. "Great Expectations" (1860-1861) by Charles Dickens. It depicts the orphan Pip's journey from poverty to gentility and explores the themes of social class and personal growth. "The Mill on

the Floss" (1860) by George Eliot which depicts the coming-of-age of Maggie Tulliver and examines gender roles and societal expectations.

The Colonial Novels

As the British Empire expanded, novels dealing with colonial experiences and perspectives began to emerge. Such novels explore the relationship between colonizers and colonized, often reflect imperialist ideologies, and sometimes critiqued or questioned colonial practices. Some novels in this mode are: "Jane Eyre" (1847) by Charlotte Brontë though primarily a bildungsroman, it included colonial elements through the character of Bertha Mason, "King Solomon's Mines" (1885) by H. Rider Haggard is an adventure novel set in Africa, reflecting imperialist attitudes and popularises the "lost world" subgenre. "Kim" (1901) by Rudyard Kipling, set in India, exploring themes of identity and loyalty in a colonial context and reflecting complex attitudes towards imperialism.

The Naturalist Novels

Towards the end of the Victorian era, naturalism emerged as an extension of realism, influenced by Darwinian theories. This type of novel emphasises the role of environment and heredity in shaping character, often focusses on the lives of lower classes or marginalised groups adopting a more detached, scientific approach to storytelling. Notable works in this mode are: "Tess of the d'Urbervilles" (1891) by Thomas Hardy which explores the impact of social circumstances and chance on an individual's fate and challenges Victorian notions of morality and justice. "The Way of All Flesh" (1903) by Samuel Butler (written 1873-1884, published posthumously), criticises Victorian family life and religious hypocrisy and incorporates ideas about heredity and environment.

These various novel types often overlapped and influenced each other, creating a rich and diverse literary landscape. Victorian authors frequently combined elements from different genres, pushing the boundaries of the novel form and addressing the complex social, moral, and philosophical issues of their time.

8.2.2 Trends in the Victorian Poetry

Victorian poetry is marked by a transition between Romanticism and Modernism. It is characterized by exploration of doubt and religious skepticism, increased focus on form and technique, use of dramatic monologue to explore character psychology and engagement with contemporary social and political issues. Alfred, Lord Tennyson and Robert Browning were prominent figures in this poetic transition, with works like Tennyson's "In Memoriam A.H.H." (1850) and Browning's "Men and Women" (1855) exemplifying these trends. Victorian poets preserved both traditional forms and innovated new ones. Different types of poetic forms were used which are as follows:

Dramatic Monologue

Perfected by Browning, this form allowed for complex character studies. Notable works in this field are "My Last Duchess" (1842): A chilling dramatic monologue, "The Ring and the Book" (1868-1869): A long poem telling one story from multiple perspectives, "Men and Women" (1855): A collection showcasing his mastery of dramatic monologue by Browning and "Ulysses" (1842): A dramatic monologue exploring aging and adventure by Tennyson and "Portraits" (1870): A collection of dramatic monologues giving voice to women by Augusta Webster (1837-1894).

Sonnet

Both traditional and innovative uses of the sonnet form were popular. Creative works in this section are: "Sonnets from the Portuguese" (1850): A sequence of love sonnets by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, "House of Life" (1881): A sonnet sequence exploring love and loss by D.G. Rossetti and "Remember" (1862): A sonnet on memory and mourning by Christina Rossetti.

Epic Poetry

Long narrative poems remained important, often with a contemporary twist. Notable works that participated in this field are: "Aurora Leigh" (1856) by Elizabeth Barrett Browning which is a long verse novel in nine books and Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market" (1862), which is a complex poetic allegory about sexual temptation, "The Earthly Paradise" (1868-1870): A large-scale poetic work retelling classical and medieval tales from Greece and Scandinavia.

Ballads

Both traditional and literary ballads were written. Examples are: "Poems and Ballads" (1866): by A.C. Swinburne, A collection that shocked Victorian sensibilities, "The Lady of Shalott" (1832 and 1842) by Tennyson is a haunting tale of magic and art and his 'ballads and Other Poems" (1880), is about the common people and in response to Wordsworth's pre Victorian poetry and Oscar Wilde's "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" (1898): A long poem based on his imprisonment.

Free Verse Poetry

Towards the end of the era, some poets began to break from strict metrical patterns. Many poets of the Victorian era experimented with free verse. Christina Rossetti, Coventry Patmore and T.E. Brown all compose their poems in free verse. Gerard Manley Hopkins developed "sprung rhythm" and pioneered new poetic techniques. His "The Wreck of the Deutschland" (1876): An ode showcasing his innovative style, "Pied Beauty" (1877): A celebration of nature's diversity and Algernon Charles Swinburne's "Atalanta in Calydon" (1865): A poem in classical Greek style.

Elegy

Elegiac poetry was also in fashion during the Victorian age. "In Memoriam A.H.H." (1850) by Tennyson is an elegy exploring grief and religious doubt and "Dover Beach" (1867): by Matthew Arnold is a meditation on loss of faith and uncertainty.

Lyric

Tennyson, Algernon Charles Swinburne, and Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote lyrically lush poems that aspired toward music, delighting in mesmerizing meters. "Poems, Chiefly Lyrical", collection of poems by Alfred, Lord Tennyson, published in 1830. Many of the poems contain experimental elements such as irregular metres and words employed for their musical or evocative powers rather than for their strict meanings, and "Dramatic Romances and Lyrics" (1845) by Robert Browning. These poems reflect the Victorian era's emphasis on individual emotion, nature and lyrical expression.

Rise of Women Writers

The Victorian era saw a significant increase in women writers, who challenged societal norms and gender roles**,** explored themes of female agency and independence and often wrote under male pseudonyms to gain recognition. George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans) and the Brontë sisters were at the forefront of this trend, paving the way for future generations of women writers. Emily Brontë's "Complete Poems" (published posthumously in 1941): Showcasing her unique voice and imagination and Michael Field's (pseudonym of Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper) "Underneath the Bough" (1893): A collaborative work exploring love and nature.

The Pre-Raphaelite Poetry

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, formed in 1848, had a significant impact on Victorian poetry, emphasizing vivid imagery and medieval themes. Key features of this type of poetry are: Rich, sensuous imagery, interest in medieval subjects and Arthurian legends and emphasis on the connection between visual art and poetry. Notable poets and their works in this connection are: Dante Gabriel

Rossetti's "The Blessed Damozel" (1850): A poem blending sensuality and spirituality and William Morris's "The Defence of Guenevere" (1858): A collection of poems on medieval themes.

8.2.3 Trends in the Victorian Drama

The Victorian era saw significant developments in theatrical traditions, moving from the popular melodramas of the early 19th century to the more naturalistic plays of the late Victorian period. This transition reflected broader social and cultural changes and set the stage for modern drama.

Melodrama

Melodrama dominated the early Victorian stage, appealing to a wide audience with its emotional intensity and moral clarity. Its key features are: stereotypical characters (hero, villain, damsel in distress), exaggerated emotions and situations, clear moral messages and spectacular staging and special effects. Notable works and playwrights in this section are: "Black-Ey'd Susan" (1829) by Douglas Jerrold which is a nautical melodrama that remained popular throughout the Victorian era. "The Corsican Brothers" (1852) by Dion Boucicault featuring supernatural elements and revenge themes and **"**The Colleen Bawn" (1860), an Irish melodrama that was hugely successful in both Britain and America.

Farce and Comedy

Light entertainment remained popular throughout the Victorian period, with farces and comedies drawing large audiences. Key features of these types are: humorous situations and misunderstandings, **s**tock characters and types and often included elements of social satire. Notable works and playwrights in this section are: "London Assurance" (1841) by Dion Boucicault is a comedy of manners that satirises both city and country life, **"**Our American Cousin" (1858) by Tom Taylor, famous for being the play Abraham Lincoln was watching when he was assassinated, "Charley's Aunt" (1892) by Brandon Thomas, a farce involving cross-dressing and mistaken identity that became a long-running hit.

Narrative Adaptations

Many Victorian plays were adaptations of popular novels, capitalising on the public's familiarity with these stories. Notable adaptations in this series are: "Oliver Twist" - Various adaptations of Charles Dickens' novel, "Jane Eyre" - Charlotte Brontë's novel was frequently adapted for the stage, "East Lynne" - Mrs. Henry Wood's sensational novel became a staple of Victorian theater**.**

Historical Dramas

Plays set in historical periods were popular, often used to comment on contemporary issues. Notable works of this field are: "Becket" (1893) by Alfred, Lord Tennyson- a verse drama about Thomas Becket and Henry II, and "The Cup" (1881)- set in ancient Galatia, exploring themes of love and duty.

Poetic Dramas

Some Victorian poets attempted to revive poetic drama, though these were often more successful as reading material than stage productions. Notable works of this section are: "Strafford" (1837) "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon" (1843) by Robert Browning and "Harold" (1876) by Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

Realistic Drama

In the latter part of the Victorian era, playwrights began to move away from melodrama towards more realistic depictions of life. Key features of these types are: more nuanced characters and situations, exploration of social issues and less reliance on spectacle and more focus on dialogue.

Notable works and playwrights in this case are: T.W. Robertson- known for his "cup and saucer" dramas that depicted middle-class life. His "Caste" (1867) explores class divisions in a more realistic manner, Arthur Wing Pinero bridged the gap between Victorian melodrama and more modern realism. His "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" (1893) dealt with the then-scandalous topic of a woman with a past. Oscar Wilde Combined elements of the well-made play with biting social satire. His "Lady Windermere's Fan" (1892) and "The Importance of Being Earnest" (1895) critiqued Victorian society through wit and paradox**.**

Psychological Realism and Social Criticism

The works of Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen had a significant impact on late Victorian drama, introducing a new level of psychological realism and social criticism. Notable works in this category are: "Widowers' Houses" (1892) by George Bernard Shaw. Shaw's first play, addressing the issue of slum landlords, "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith" (1895) by Arthur Wing Pinero- explores unconventional relationships and women's roles.

The Rise of the "New Drama"

Towards the end of the Victorian era, a movement known as the "New Drama' emerged, setting the stage for 20th-century modernism. Its key features are: emphasis on social issues and criticism, more naturalistic dialogue and staging, influence of European dramatists like Ibsen and Strindberg. Notable works are: George Bernard Shaw's "Mrs. Warren's Profession" (written 1893, performed 1902) challenges Victorian morality and Harley Granville-Barker's "The Voysey Inheritance" (1905) examines family and financial corruption.

Victorian drama reflected the changing social, moral, and aesthetic values of the time. It moved from the excesses of melodrama to the beginnings of modern realism, paving the way for the theatrical revolutions of the 20th century. The era's drama encompassed a wide range of styles and subjects, from light entertainment to serious social criticism, mirroring the complexities of Victorian society itself.

8.2.4 Trends in the Victorian Prose

Realistic Prose

Realism became a dominant trend in Victorian prose, marking a shift from the romanticism of the previous era. Key features of these types are: detailed depiction of everyday life, focus on contemporary social issues, emphasis on accuracy and verisimilitude and character-driven narratives. Examples are: George Eliot's "Middlemarch" (1871-1872), Anthony Trollope's Barsetshire novels (1855-1867) and Elizabeth Gaskell's "Mary Barton" (1848).

Social Commentary and Critique

Victorian prose often served as a vehicle for social criticism and reform. Examples are: Charles Dickens' "Oliver Twist" (1837-1839) and "Hard Times" (1854), Benjamin Disraeli's "Sybil" (1845) and Elizabeth Gaskell's "North and South" (1854-1855)**.Psychological Prose**

Victorian prose writers increasingly explored the psychological complexity of their characters. Examples are: George Eliot's exploration of moral psychology in "Middlemarch" (1871), Thomas Hardy's fatalistic characters in "Tess of the d'Urbervilles" (1891) and Charlotte Brontë's first-person narration in "Jane Eyre" (1847).

Narrative Prose

Victorian authors experimented with narrative techniques and structures. Examples are: Wilkie Collins' use of multiple narrators in "The Woman in White" (1859-1860), Emily Brontë's complex

narrative structure in "Wuthering Heights" (1847) and Charles Dickens' interconnected narratives in "Bleak House" (1852-1853).

Gothic and Sensational Prose

Despite the prevalence of realism, Gothic and sensational elements remained popular in Victorian prose. Examples are: Emily Brontë's "Wuthering Heights" (1847), Wilkie Collins' "The Moonstone" (1868) and Robert Louis Stevenson's "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" (1886).

Didactic and Moral Prose

Many Victorian prose works had a strong didactic element, aiming to instruct readers morally and socially. George Eliot's exploration of moral choice in "Silas Marner" (1861), Charles Dickens' moralistic tales like "A Christmas Carol" (1843) and Samuel Butler's satirical approach in "The Way of All Flesh" (written 1873-1884, published 1903) are some notable examples.

Scientific and Philosophical Prose

Victorian prose often engaged with the scientific and philosophical ideas of the time. George Eliot's incorporation of scientific ideas in "Middlemarch" H.G. Wells' early science fiction like "The Time Machine" (1895) and Thomas Hardy's fatalistic philosophy in his later novels are some examples in this category.

Development of Children's Literature

The Victorian era saw a golden age of children's literature, with prose works specifically written for young readers. Notable examples in this section are: Lewis Carroll's "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" (1865), Charles Kingsley's "The Water-Babies" (1863) and Frances Hodgson Burnett's "Little Lord Fauntleroy" (1886).

Victorian prose was characterised by its diversity, social engagement, and narrative innovation. It reflected the complexities of an era marked by rapid social, technological, and intellectual change. The trends established during this period continue to influence literature to this day, making Victorian prose a crucial link between earlier literary traditions and the modernist innovations of the 20th century.

8.3 LET'S SUM UP

In this section we have discussed about diverse literary trends in the Victorian literature. Victorian age was rich in literary productivity and established social, economic and political condition of the age made it possible to come to the fore many literary trends that shaped the multidimensional outpouring of new kinds of literary trends. These trends shaped the literary landscape of the Victorian era, producing a rich and diverse body of work that continues to influence literature today. Victorian poetry reflected the complexities and contradictions of the age, ranging from exquisite formal control to radical experimentation, from celebration of progress to anxiety about change. It laid the groundwork for the poetic revolutions of the 20th century while preserving and reinterpreting the traditions of the past.

8.4 QUESTIONS

- Make a short note on Epic, Ballad and Sonnet.
- What is realistic novel?
- Differentiate between farce and comedy.
- What is free verse poetry?

- What is poetic drama?
- What is Bildungsroman novel?
- Make a short note on different forms of prose during Victorian age.
- What is Gothic novel?

8.5 FURTHER READINGS

- M.H. Abrams' A Handbook of Literary Terms.
- Glimpses, Trends in Literatures in English edited by Datta G. Sawant.
- R.D Trivedi's A Compendious History of English Literature.
- Literary Forms, Trends and Movements by Dr. Raghukul Tilak.
- A Book on English Literary Trends by Konda Murali.
- A Companion to Literary Forms by Padmaja Ashok.
- History of English Literature by Edward Albert.
- History of English Literature by William J. Long.
- A Short History of English Literature by Ifor Evans.
- Jashodhara Bagchi (Ed): Literature, Society and Ideology in the Victorian Era.
- A.C. Baugh, Literary History of England, Volume IV.

INTRODUCTION TO BLOCK III

In this block, the learners will be introduced to a new age in literature that is the Modern Age. The Modern Age in English Literature started from the beginning of the twentieth century, and it followed the Victorian Age. The most important characteristic of Modern Literature is that it is opposed to the general attitude to life and its problems adopted by the Victorian writers and the public, which may be termed 'Victorian'. The young people during the first decade of the present century regarded the Victorian age as hypocritical, and the Victorian ideals as mean, superficial correct the space and stupid. The Modern Age marked a departure from the complacency of the Victorian Age. The new developments in psychology combined with the spiritual vacuum created in the early 20th century paved the way for new literary styles. The effects of World War, Imperialism, etc. were seen in the literary creations of the time. Generally speaking, the twentieth century marked a significant shift in the history of Great Britain and also in the imaginative writing of the period. Looking back to the literature of the previous century (also referred to as Victorian literature: late 1930s to 1901), it is obvious that both in style and content, the twentieth century English literature is different. The difference is not unconnected to certain events which shattered human experiences and questioned age-long beliefs and practices, including how literature should be written.

The First and Second World Wars, the development and use of sophisticated chemical weapons, the emergence of new theories such as Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution and Sigmund Freud's Theory of Psychoanalysis were among the major reasons for this change. People's world view, attitudes, and disposition to life changed as they could not rationally explain the kind of chaos, dehumanisation and destruction their normal and peaceful world had witnessed as a result of the wars. Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory interrogates and negates the biblical account of creation while Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis opens up discussions on the inner workings of the human mind. This block is divided into four units.

Unit – 9 focuses on socio-political, aesthetic and cultural background of the twentieth century English literature. Generally, it was an era of change and the writings of the period also reflected this change. The experience and feelings of alienation, loss and despair were evident in the works of writers of this period. Modernist writers had a new 'subject matter' for literature as they believed that their new way of looking at life required a new form, a new way of thinking and writing. Consequently, writers were more experimental, innovative and very individualistic in their writing. Therefore, they tried to do something pioneering in their writing as they were influenced by new ideas from the emerging fields of psychology.

Unit – 10 is dedicated to the study of major modern poets. Poets like W. B. Yeats, T. S. Eliot, Auden and others shaped the literary concerns of the age by portraying the spiritual and metaphysical vacuum created in the modern minds by various forces and events such as- industrialization, World War, etc. Poets such as T. S. Eliot and W. B. Yeats mark the greatest heights that the modernist poetry could achieve which brings to the fore the anxieties of the age and tries to provide a just representation of the modern man.

Unit – 11 provides a comprehensive study to the modern playwrights and novelists. The modern novelists and playwrights rejected the culture of the past but at the same time, it would be wrong to say that the 20th century novels and plays as an art form were dead. As the novel of this age broke free from the dominance of religion and moral codes, it experimented with techniques like stream of consciousness and genre like science fiction. Modern play deals with real situations: real characters, real incidents and employs the use of everyday language. It also deals with the common man, an ordinary man who suffers the difficulties of life, such as those living next door.

Unit – 12 provides a detailed analysis of trends and texts of modern English literature. Modern literature is marked by its focus on the individual, the exploration of the inner self, and the depiction of complex psychological states. Many modern authors were interested in breaking away from traditional forms of storytelling and experimenting with different narrative techniques, such as stream of consciousness and multiple perspectives. Moreover, modern literature reflects the changing attitudes and values of society at the time. Many authors were interested in social and political issues, such as gender and class inequality, and incorporated them into their works. This gave rise to new genres, such as the modernist novel and the social problem novel.

Unit- 9 Modern English Literature: Socio-Political, Aesthetic and Cultural Background

Structure

9.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- Know about a new concept in literature i.e. Modern Age.

- Know why the British Empire could not continue its supremacy.
- Know about socio, political, aesthetic and cultural background of modern English literature.
- Analyse how the Modern English literature is different from the Victorian Literature.
- Know the importance of modernism in literature.
- Know about the factors affecting modernism.

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Modernism is applied in different fields. In Arts it refers to the end of the Victorian Era's customs and marks the beginning of the enquiry into industrial age and related issues. With it we find a denial of the past with experimentation, for social purposes. Starting in the late nineteenth century and continuing to the middle of the twentieth century, Modernism reached its peak in literature with the publication of *The Waste Land* by T.S. Eliot and *Ulysses* by James Joyce. In Twentieth Century Literature, there were moves and breakaways from the traditions that the Victorian had retained. There was also a breakaway from the kind of real life experiences being represented. More complex experiences were occurring making writers rethink deep the present and future of humanity. The Twentieth Century English Literature began in the post-Victorian period and got to its peak with the Modernist movement.

9.2 THE TERM "MODERNISM"

The term modernism is a period, style, genre or the combination of all. More predominantly, the term 'modern' has been frequently and repeatedly used to attribute to the avant-garde, as M.H. Abrams explains the word – is a French military metaphor: " advance-guard" that is, a small, self-conscious group of artists and authors who deliberately undertake, in Ezra Pound's phrase, to "make it new." By violating the accepted conventions and prevalent proprieties, not only of art but of social discourse, they set out to create ever-new artistic forms and styles and to introduce hitherto neglected, and sometimes forbidden, subject matter. Frequently, avant-garde artists represent themselves as "alienated" from the established order, against which they assert their own autonomy, a prominent aim is to shock the sensibilities of the conventional reader and to challenge the norms and pieties of the dominant bourgeois culture. Although since the Second World War, this sense has been popular by the term 'contemporary' while 'modern' has shifted from the meaning 'now' to 'just now'. The Modern movement in the arts, however, delineated as being almost synonymous with the advent of the twentieth century, in fact, goes back to the last decades of the nineteenth century when the foundations and base of the high Victorian culture were facing serious menace from various agencies. Being a cultural phenomenon, Modernism saw the exodus from pre-existing modes of aesthetic engagement to the sphere of art. The term Modernism applies and refers to the literature, music, painting, film, and architecture and also to some works before and after this period. In poetry, Modernism is linked and connected with moves to break from the iambic pentameter as the basic unit of verse, to introduce *vers libre*, i.e. free verse, symbolism, and other new and various forms of writing. In prose, Modernism is associated with the endeavours to render human subjectivity in more accurate and authentic ways than that of realism such as, to represent consciousness, perception, viewpoint, emotion, feeling, meaning and the individual's relation and alliance with the society through interior monologue, stream of consciousness, nonlinear narratives, rhythm, imagery and themes, and various other techniques. Hence, the Modernist writers endeavoured and refers to, Ezra Pound's brief phrase, 'Make it New'. Therefore, the modernist literature generally focuses on the individual, rather than the society as a whole, a growing tendency not only to depict the outer reality but also turn the gaze inwards.

The term "modern" denotes so many ideas and concepts that it is almost impossible to define the term in a clear cut way. Therefore, the idea of modern and modernity remains so varied and disturbing in the academic history. Sometimes the Elizabethan age is referred to as the first modern age; whereas some literary historians feel that true modernism starts with the eighteenth century when for the first time the spirit of Reason came in the history of European civilisation. Modern era which to some begins in 1890s, while others think it begins in 1901, with the death of Queen Victoria, while another view is that it starts during the First World War. The kind of confusion about when Modernism began is there because there are varied views about what actually constitutes Modernism. Only the literary scholars are of the same view that the High Modernism began in the year 1922, with the publication of three major literary writings – T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room*.

9.3 SOCIO-POLITICAL BACKGROUND

The long and progressive reign of Queen Victoria came to a climax in the Diamond Jubilee Year (1897), a time of peace and plenty when the British Empire seemed to be at the zenith of its power and security. When Queen Victoria died, England was one of the most powerful nations in the world, the British Empire was huge, the Navy and the Army were well trained and invincible, the manufacturing and trading middle class was prosperous. However, the 20th century saw the decline of Britain partly caused by the impressive growth of German industry and also by new emerging powers, the USA and Japan. The two political parties that ruled Britain in the Victorian era have in the present century undergone a sweeping change. The Conservatives are today no longer drawn exclusively from the aristocracy as under Disraeli, but have a large admixture of the middle classes; while the Liberals have been almost completely ousted and their place has been taken by the Labour Party. The aim of either government in power is the same, viz. to achieve the 'Welfare State' a state, that is to say, which ensures the well-being of every one of its citizens from the cradle to the grave. The only difference between them is in respect of the speed of reform. The Conservatives do not blindly oppose all measures of reform; only, they are for a 'go slow' policy. The Labour Party, on the other hand, stands for forcing the pace of socialism in order to achieve the ideal in the shortest possible time. At the beginning of the twentieth century Britain was undoubtedly the mightiest world power with a far-flung empire. As a result of the two world wars, however, and especially after the second, that empire is no more. Her supremacy has now passed to USA and Russia. Reduced to a second class power, Britain is at the moment trying to bolster up her position in the international sphere by seeking membership of the European Economic Community (EEC) or European Common Market, an economic organisation of the countries of Western Europe on the lines of their military organisation, called the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) established after the second world war as a collective defence system against Russia.

9.4 THE EDWARDIAN PERIOD

Queen Victoria died in 1901, bringing the grand Victorian age - a period marked by political stability, imperial glory, and industrial and scientific achievements for Britain - to a close, and was succeeded by her son Edward VII. The dawn of the twentieth century, thus coincided neatly with the beginning of a new period, the Edwardian period, in British history. When Edward VII died in 1910, George V came to the British throne, and reigned till his death in 1936. Though Edward VII ruled only till 1910, the period from 1901 up to 1914, is generally referred to as the Edwardian period. Ian Cawood remarks that though it is often spoken of as 'a golden age of peace and harmony', before the disruption created by World War I from 1914 onwards, it was actually a great period of turmoil.

The end of the Boer War in 1902 was followed by general election which returned the Conservatives with a substantial majority. Lord Salisbury, however, resigned, and his nephew Arthur

James Balfour became Prime Minister. In the general election of 1906, the Conservatives were defeated and the Liberals came to power with a large majority. More significant for the future was the emergence of the Labour Party as a real political force with as many as 29 members. The election had been fought mainly on the issue of Free trade vs. Protective tariffs. The free traders won and Joseph Chamberlain, the fanatical champion of protection, received a blow from which he never recovered, and died in 1914. He had split the Conservative party and it was on this issue that Winston Churchill left the party and joined the Liberals in 1904. Liberal party launched a programme of social reforms to help the poor and the old, laying the foundations of the welfare state. It was the first time the British Government decided to spend money on the welfare of people; the most important reforms included School Meal Act for providing meals for children in need; Coal Mines Regulation Act for 8 hours' working day, Old Age Pension for people over 70; Parliament Act to weaken the power of the House of Lords and National Insurance Act: to insure workers against sickness. The Liberals were also committed to Home Rule for Ireland and they redeemed their promise to Redmond by passing the Irish Home Rule Bill in 1912. Asquith's chief difficulty was the opposition of Northern Ireland (Ulster). Being protestant it would not merge in the southern Catholic Ireland. On the other hand, the Irish nationalists would not accept the exclusion of Ulster. Passions were roused on both sides and the dispute led to near rebellion. Asquith knew that Ulster could not be coerced to join the south, but he dare not say so openly for fear of losing the support of Redmond and his party in the Parliament. As was expected, the Bill was rejected by the House of Lords. This merely meant a delay of two years and the Bill automatically became law in 1914. Just then the war broke out and the Home Rule Act was suspended during the war.

9.5 WORLD WAR I

When George V went to the throne in 1910 he had to face the event which changed the face of the world: World War I. The main cause was the ambition of the German Emperor William II who abandoned the policy of peace of Bismarck and jumped on the Imperialist bandwagon. He wanted his country to become a world power who will be more powerful than England and France. He wanted to conquer the Balkan State to cut off Russia from the Mediterranean and England from its control over Egypt and India. On 28 June 1914, the Archduke Ferdinand, son of the Austrian emperor, was murdered by a Serbian student in Sarajevo, capital of Bosnia. Austria sent an ultimatum to Serbia making demands that no self-respecting country could accept. Austria declared war on Serbia. Russia ordered mobilisation and Germany declared war upon Russia. This was followed by German declaration of war on France. On 4 August, Germany invaded Belgium to force a passage to France. Belgium's neutrality had been guaranteed in 1839 by Germany, France and Britain, but Germany treated that guarantee as a scrap of paper. On that same day Britain declared war on Germany. On the British side fought France, Russia, Italy (she broke the Triple Alliance), Japan, and much later (April 1917) USA. On the German side were Austria and Turkey. USA was drawn to the war by the indiscriminate sinking of her ships by German submarines. Following the Bolshevik Revolution of 7 November 1917, Russia concluded a separate peace with Germany and Austria in December 1917 and signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (3 March 1918). It was a peace dictated by Germany as to a defeated nation. Russia gave up Poland and the Baltic provinces. Germany and her allies were completely defeated. William II fled to neutral Holland, and Armistice was signed on 11 November 1918 and the Peace treaty was signed at Versailles in 1919. The war caused the ruin of the four great European Empires and made possible a communist revolution in Russia. The American President Wilson devised a plan to keep peace so the League of Nations was born, but the American Senate voted against involvement in European matters, so the USA never joined the league. During the years of the first post-war period enthusiasm was replaced by discomfort and disillusion. The First World War led to the death of millions of young soldiers, destroyed entire towns and cities, and left permanent scars on the twentieth century psyche. Numerous tensions and power struggles for supremacy among European

nations, led up to the war, which proved to be a painful experience for the entire world. World War I was such a traumatic experience, that every art form, every literary genre responded to it, and reflected its horrors.

9.6 POST WAR YEARS

The growth in industries in Asia and Japan caused a deterioration of European economy, great depression, which was made worse by the Wall Street crash in 1929 followed by the new deal policy established by the American President Roosevelt. It was an age of reforms according to which people were set to work on jobs which were useful to the community as building new roads, schools, hospitals. It was only towards the end of the 30s that the situation improved. Industries were reorganized and new sectors were created such as electricity, artificial fibres, plastic and motor-vehicles. Mass production led to the creation of chain stores, advertising became very important, the growth of the population slowed down because of birth-control practices, families became smaller and women with more leisure time became more independent. The most important single consequence of the War on society was a strengthening of the sentiments and passions of nationalism, of which the principles of national self-determination applied in the settlement were only a reflection. The war gave rise to nationalist pride and patriotic fervour. Nationalism in Ireland and India now could not be stemmed. There was trouble in Ireland and finally the Irish Free State was established in 1921. In India the struggle for independence had taken a new turn. There were agitations in other colonies as well. The Imperial Conference of 1926 appointed the Balfour Committee to define the status of Dominion. It declared that they were "autonomous communities within the British empire, equal in status and in no way subordinate one to one another." The equality of status was embodied in the Statute of Westminster in 1931. This marked a profound change in the British Colonial policy by which the Dominions became independent states in all respect, bound together by a common symbol, the crown. Britain ceased to be the ruling head and became an equal partner in the British Commonwealth.

The social upheavals caused by the War were enormous. The normal balance of age-groups and of sexes in the population was upset, because family life was disrupted during mobilization, millions of young men were killed, and the birth-rate fell sharply only to rise equally sharply after the war. Women, patriotically in war factories and services, entered the labour market on a scale unknown before. Finding thereby an economic basis for greater independence, many women remained in it. Their role in the War effort made their demands for the vote irresistible after the War. The social and economic emancipation of women was accompanied by a severe criticism of the prevailing standards of sexual conduct and morality. Young men and women protested against the old ideals of love and matrimony and the obligations imposed by them. They sought complete freedom of thought and action, and discussed the problems of conjugal life with refreshing candour. Sexual morality was regarded as a matter of personal and social hygiene. D. H. Lawrence desired that men and women should think about sex 'freely, completely, honestly and cleanly'. Love was stripped of its garb of moral and religious idealism, and regarded as a natural human need or physical urge for reproduction, The First World War caused great destruction in life and property. In the War over a million Englishmen were killed and two million wounded. She lost over six million tonnes of shipping. Nearly half her merchant fleet had been destroyed. Before the War, British companies had held huge investments in the United States, but during the War, England sold these investments in America to buy supplies, compensating their owners in pounds. In addition, England raised large war-loans in America. As a result, the United States emerged from the War as the world's greatest creditor, and England owed over 1,000 million pounds to America. Thus after the War Britain was in the grip of severe economic distress. There was acute unemployment because of the closure of the war industries and the demobilization of the armies. Trade declined because of the heavy loss of shipping suffered during the War. England had also to face rivals in the international market. She had to face rivalry in

trade and commerce with America and Japan. Decline in exports compelled British industries to reduce production, and this in turn resulted in unemployment. By the end of 1931, the number of the unemployed had reached three million. Inevitably the post-war years, especially 1918-33, witnessed a good deal of industrial unrest. Lloyd George had to face a number of strikes and Baldwin's Conservative government is memorable for the general strike of 1926.

9.7 WORLD WAR II

In 1918 the Liberal Party was replaced by the Labour Party even if power was always in the hands of the Conservatives, who faced the Second World War. When in 1936 George V died, his son Edward VIII went to the throne but his reign only lasted 10 months because he abdicated in favour of his brother George VI to marry a twice-divorced American lady. George had to face the second world conflict. It started in 1939 when Hitler invaded Poland and in 1940 Denmark and Norway and then Holland, Belgium and France. England and France formed a coalition to stop Germany, the USA decided not to join the war at first and Roosevelt only obtained consent from the Congress to send war material to England. In 1940 Italy declared war on France and England, France was defeated and in England there was the Battle of Britain won by the pilots of the Royal Air force. In 1941 Germany attacked Russia and Japan bombed the American naval base of Pearl Harbour forcing the USA to enter the war. Because of the cold Russian winter Germany and Italy were defeated, Italy was invaded by the Americans in 1943 and in 1944 the allies invaded Normandy and freed France. The USA, using atomic bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima destroyed Japan so the war was over. In 1945 after Hitler's suicide Germany surrendered.

As regards England, the two main events were the situation in India and the Irish question. As for India the situation worsened because many Indians had fought for Britain in the First World War and asked for more freedom but the English Parliament refused so Gandhi started a campaign of non-violent civil disobedience and non-cooperation until the British government declared to leave India in 1947. Thus India was divided into two parts: a Hindi one and a Muslim one later called Pakistan and Gandhi was killed by a fanatic in 1948. Even other dominions of the former British Empire acquired their independence as Africa, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Commonwealth was created.

World War II's manifestation of the human capacity for evil & the apparent triumph of human nature's "dark side" raised profound moral, religious, and spiritual questions. The survivors struggled to come to terms with their own feelings of guilt and responsibility, deserved or not, for what happened in the War, and could not bring themselves to speak or write of their condition which eventually led to a response in the art world in the form of existentialism and the theater of the absurd.

9.8 CULTURAL AND AESTHETIC BACKGROUND

World wars made a very huge impact on society. This impact developed a new approach of art, literature, philosophy and religion. For literature, it created a new genre about the war. After a war won at a dire cost in blood, spirit and money, London was no longer the centre to which Pound and Eliot had come, in the steps of Henry James. Younger Americans went to Paris, Pound left for Paris and Italy, Ford for Paris and the US, the sole remaining Anglo modernist who was entirely English. Modernist literature was not very English, and was largely written by exiles. Exiles is the name of a play by James Joyce, who avoided England. When the Irish Free State was created in 1921, Joyce had been thirty-nine years of British Citizen. Yeats, who was then fifty-seven, continued to spend much of his time in England. Samuel Beckett (1906-89), sometimes called the last modernist, left Ireland in 1937 for Paris.

Technological development had advanced more than it did in the years before and

experiences became more complex and the British were beginning to observe the adverse effects of industrialisation. The Post-Victorian writers depicted how the beautiful landscape of Britain was being disfigured by the establishment of industries and how industrialisation diminished the lives of the people who struggled to survive in mining towns, for example. This is because with the emergence of industries, machines took over some of the jobs that were usually done by human beings and the lush Greenland gave way to industrial buildings. Instead of linear and coherent plot of the Victorian literature, the Post-Victorian literature (the Edwardian Literature) employs disjointedness. This disjointedness is not only a style to the writers, it is a way of showing that the life people live in this world is not an ordered sequence. In poetry, the writers used unrhymed verse. Morals were no longer considered essential. Unlike the morality in Robinson Crusoe, there is no moral in E.M. Forster's *Howards Ends* (1910). The representation of the real experiences of life in unified pattern stopped. Women became more prominent in the Post-Victorian literature than they were in the Victorian literature. The industrial revolution of the Victorian period had brought empowerment to a lot of women; instead of just remaining at home as housewives and farmhands, women got jobs in garment industries, food processing industries and so on. As a way of representing reality, Post-Victorian English Literature depicted women in terms of the opportunities they had for self-development in the modern world. For example, Helen Schlegel in *Howards Ends* becomes a single mother with no intention of marrying. She is able to take care of herself without a husband. In short, writers in the Post-Victorian period represented the individual and actual experiences that were in Britain, and which resulted from the high level of economic development and the new ways and social struggles of the people living in Britain. Themes were developed around issues such as the importance of landscape and the earth, the mechanised, industrial world and the role of women in a changing world. The most important characteristic of Modern Literature is that it is opposed to the general attitude to life and its problems adopted by the Victorian writers and the public, which may be termed 'Victorian'. The young people during the first decade of the twentieth century regarded the Victorian age as hypocritical, and the Victorian ideals as mean, superficial and stupid. This rebellious mood affected modern literature, which was directed by mental attitudes moral ideals and spiritual values diametrically opposed to those of the Victorians. Nothing was considered as certain; everything was questioned as there was a mood of cynical enquiry.

In the wake of the happenings that took place after the world war, writers sought for new ways to represent these new realities. The world according to them had gone through a most confounding experience that had fragmented and disrupted the normal and peaceful flow of life and human relations so, what was written would change and the style of writing too must change. According to Christopher Reed, these writers sought for writings "appropriate to the sensibilities of the modern outlook". Prominent among these writers are James Joyce, W.B Yeats, Ford Madox Ford, Gertrude Stein, Virginia Woolf, D.H Lawrence, T.S Eliot, Aldous Huxley, Stevie Smith and a host of others. By definition, literary modernism is the radical shift in aesthetics and cultural sensibilities evident in the art and literature produced after the First World War. It is basically about modern thoughts, modern characters, modern styles or practices that arose after the change that affected the nature of human life and relationships. Although modernists built upon the progress of the post-Victorian literature, modernism in literature came up as a reaction against Victorian literary tradition. Modernism thus marks a distinctive break from Victorian bourgeois morality as it rejects the 19th Century optimism while presenting a profound pessimistic picture of a culture in disarray. It seeks for new aesthetics as against the traditional and old ways of writing because modernist writers saw traditional ways of writing as outmoded and inadequate.

Modernist writers argue that modern life is not symmetrical but is characterised by disjointedness, restlessness, absurdity, alienation, gloom, sadness, and the disruption of the traditionally accepted way of living. To the modernist writers, institutions in which they hitherto

believed are no longer considered as reliable means to give meaning to life; they believe that people should turn to themselves to discover the answers to life issues. In other words, the world is better viewed from individuals' perspectives. This antipathy towards traditional institutions became the basis of the literary propositions of the modernist writers and this belief found its way into their writings and reflects in the contents and forms of their writings. The whole essence of writing, to the modernists, is to present life in its decadence and ugliness, and show that man is disillusioned, confused and marooned in a world that is devoid of order and peace.

Another important factor which influenced modern literature was the large number of people of the poor classes who were educated by the State. In order to meet their demand for reading the publishers of the early twentieth century began whole series of cheaply reprinted classics. This was supplemented by the issue of anthologies of Victorian literature, which illustrated a stable society fit for a governing class which had established itself on the economic laws of wealth, the truth of Christianity and the legality of the English Constitution. But these failed to appeal to the new cheaply educated reading public who had no share in the inheritance of those ideals, who wanted redistribution of wealth, and had their own peculiar codes of moral and sexual freedom. Even those who were impressed by the wit and wisdom of the past could not shut their eyes to the change that had come about on account of the use of machinery, scientific development, and the general atmosphere of instability and flux in which they lived. So they demanded a literature which suited the new atmosphere. The modern writers found in these readers a source of power and income, if they could only appeal to them, and give them what they wanted. The temptation to do so was great and it was fraught with great dangers, because the new reading public was uncertain of their ideologies, detached from their background, but desperately anxious to be impressed. They wanted to be led and shown the way. The result was that some of the twentieth century authors exploited their enthusiasm and tried to lead their innocent readers in the quickest, easiest way, by playing on their susceptibilities. In some cases the clever writer might end as a prophet of a school in which he did not believe. Such was the power wielded by the reading public.

9.9 KEY FEATURES OF THE AGE

9.9.1 Proliferation of Education

The full effect of the Education Act of 1870, strengthened by the Act of 1902, began to make itself felt in the pre-War years. The ladder of educational opportunity, from elementary school to university, was now available to the poorest boy who had the ability to take advantage of it, and literacy became the normal rather than the unusual thing. On literature the effect was profound. Not only was there a larger market than ever before for the 'classics' and for all types of fiction, but there arose an entirely new demand for works in 'educational' fields - science, history, and travel. As a profession and as a business, literature offered better financial prospects.

9.9.2 Enormous output of Books

Authors and publishers were not slow to supply the public with what it wanted, and books poured from the presses with astonishing rapidity. Among them were numerous 'pot-boilers' by inferior writers intent only on financial gains. Even some great artists failed to resist the temptation of over-rapid and over-frequent production, and of too many of them it maybe said that they wrote too much. The sacrifice of art to business was not new - it had affected adversely some of the work of Dickens- but in the twentieth century the commercialization of literature was carried to unprecedented limits, and the problem has continued to grow.

9.9.3. The Literature of Social Purpose

The spread of literacy was accompanied by the awakening of the national conscience to the

evils resulting from the Industrial Revolution. More than ever before would-be reformers pinned their faith on the printed word and on the serious theatre as media for social propaganda, and the problem or discussion play and the novel of social purpose may be described as two of the typical literary products of the period.

9.9.4. The Dominance of the Novel

In view of the developments outlined above, it is not surprising that for the first time in its history the novel now became the dominant literary form in English. To a semi-educated modern taste prose fiction was (and still is) more palatable than poetry, which is a more sophisticated taste, while by its nature, it is more accessible to the masses than drama. In addition, the novel is admirably suited as a vehicle for the sociological studies which attracted most of the great artists of the period. The novel had become a powerful medium to depict the bleakness of an imperial civilisation in decline. It became most suitable vehicle to display the disturbed the psyche of the modern man.

9.9.5. The Rebirth of Drama

After a hundred years of insignificance, drama again appeared as an important literary form, and the thirty years under review saw men of genius, who were also practical, experienced men of the theatre and they created a live and significant drama out of the problems of their age. Like the novelists, most of the important dramatists were chiefly concerned with the contemporary social scene, and though, toward the end of the period, there were signs of a revival of poetic drama, prose was the normal medium.

9.9.6. Experiments in Literary form

Long before 1918 it had become obvious that in poetry, in the novel, and in drama the old traditional forms were outworn. Experimenters in all three fields were evolving new forms to sustain the new demands being made upon them. Progress is most rapid in the drama, but the novel too, in the hands of great masters, underwent revolutionary changes, the importance of which is sometimes underestimated because they were overshadowed by more startling experiments of the inter-War period. In poetry experiments were less sensational, and the bulk of the poetry published was in the traditional manner. For the first time for many years poetry was least significant of the important literary forms.

9.10 LITERARY FEATURES OF THE MODERN ENGLISH LITERATURE

9.10.1 Individualism

Individualism is one of the key elements of modernism. It postulates that an individual's experiences, opinions, and emotions are more fascinating rather than the events in a society as a whole. So, modernism is focused on describing the subjective reality of one person rather than societal changes or historical events on an impersonal scale. Modernist literature, typically focuses on the individual rather than the society. Particularly, modernist writers were captivated and enamoured with how the individual adapted to the changing world. In various cases, the individual succeeded over hardships and hindrance. To a large extent, the Modernist literature presented such characters who just kept their heads above water. Writers of this movement exhibited the world or society as a challenge to the honesty and integrity of their characters.

A typical protagonist in modernist literature is just trying to survive and adapt to the changing world. Presented with obstacles, the protagonist sometimes perseveres — but not always. One can find compelling examples of individualism in the works of Ernest Hemingway. In "Sons and Lovers" by D.H. Lawrence, the protagonist Paul Morel's internal struggles and personal relationships epitomise the exploration of individual consciousness and emotional complexity.

9.10.2 Stream Of Consciousness

Modernist literature is characterised by a spirit of experimentation with narrative techniques and forms. Authors challenged traditional storytelling structures, opting for non-linear narratives, fragmented plots, and unconventional use of language. Poets rejected and relinquished traditional rhyme schemes and started writing in free verse. Novelists defied and challenged all expectations. Writers mixed the images from the past with modern languages and themes, creating a collage of styles. The inner workings of consciousness were a common subject and theme for modernists. This common subject and theme led to a new form of narration, which was called the Stream of Consciousness and in this narration, the point of view of the novel drifts and meanders in a pattern resembling human thought. The eminent authors such as James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, including the poets like T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, are some of the notable and renowned modernists best known for their experimental Modernist works.

In stream of consciousness, writers aimed to depict the continuous and often chaotic flow of thoughts in the human mind without the constraints of conventional grammar and syntax. For example – "The Sound and the Fury" by William Faulkner is a prime example of experimentation with narrative form. The novel employs a stream of consciousness and a non-linear structure to convey multiple characters' perspectives. Stream of consciousness is a narrative device used in literature "to depict the multitudinous thoughts and feelings which pass through the mind". Another phrase for it is 'interior monologue'. The term "Stream of Consciousness" was coined by philosopher and psychologist William James in The Principles of Psychology (1890). Stream of consciousness and interior monologue can be distinguished from dramatic monologue and soliloquy, where the speaker is addressing an audience or a third person, which are chiefly used in poetry or drama. In stream of consciousness the speaker's thought processes are more often depicted as overheard in the mind (or addressed to oneself); it is primarily a fictional device.

9.10.3. Absurdism

The carnage of the two World Wars profoundly affected writers of the period. Several great English poets died or were wounded in WWI. At the same time, global capitalism was reorganising society at every level. For many writers, the world was becoming a more absurd place every day. The mysteriousness of life was being lost in the rush of daily life. The senseless violence of WWII was further indication that humanity had lost its way. Modernist authors depicted this absurdity in their works. Franz Kafka's allegorical novella, "The Metamorphosis," in which a travelling salesman is transformed into an insect-like creature, is an example of modern absurdism.

9.10.4. Symbolism

While symbolism in literature existed before the late 19th century, it quickly became one of the central characteristics of modernism in literature. Modernist authors and poets also reimagined symbolism. Where their predecessors left little unsaid, modernists preferred to leave plenty of blanks for the reader's imagination to fill. That, however, doesn't mean there was no attention to details. On the contrary, modernist authors infused every layer of their work of fiction with symbolic details. The difference is that their way of using symbolism in writing allowed for several interpretations, all simultaneously possible and valid. Symbolist artists sought to express individual emotional experience through the subtle and suggestive use of highly symbolized language. The Modernist writers imbued people, places, objects, images and events with significant meanings. Modernist writers envisaged a reality with multiple layers, many of them hidden or in a form of code. As a characteristic, symbolism in the modernist literary movement is most prominent in the works of James Joyce and T. S. Eliot.

9.10.5. Formalism

For the writers of the Modernist period, literature was more as a craft than a flowering and

blooming of creativity. According to them, the poems and novels were constructed from smaller parts rather than the organic, internal process that the earlier generations had delineated. The idea of literature as craft fed the Modernists' craving and desire for creativity and originality. Modernist poetry generally comprised foreign languages, dense vocabulary and invented words. For instance, the poet Edward Estlin Cummings relinquished and rejected all structure and spread his words all across the page.

As mentioned above, the 20th-century modernism was defined by the search for radically new forms of expression. Creativity fueled this search, paving the way for the emergence of original forms. In modern period literature, the writing process was no longer perceived as a laborious craft. Modernists treated it as a creative process instead. In some cases, the originality of the form was deemed more important than the substance. "Murder in the Cathedral" by T.S. Eliot showcases formalism through its poetic language and religious symbolism. The play's structure and language contribute to the overall impact of its themes.

9.10.6 Impressionism

Impressionism is the name given to a colourful style of painting in France at the end of the 19th century. The Impressionists searched for a more exact analysis of the effects of colour and light in nature. They sought to capture the atmosphere of a particular time of day or the effects of different weather conditions. They often worked outdoors and applied their paint in small brightly coloured strokes which meant sacrificing much of the outline and detail of their subject. Impressionism abandoned the conventional idea that the shadow of an object was made up from its colour with some brown or black added. Instead, the Impressionists enriched their colours with the idea that a shadow is broken up with dashes of its complementary colour.

The literary use of the term 'Impressionism' is, however, far less precise. Many of the French Symbolist poets have at one time or another been called Impressionists. In England, Walter Pater, concerned with aesthetic matters, used the term 'impressionism' in The Renaissance (1873) to indicate that the critic must first examine his own reactions in judging a work of art. Arthur Symons felt that the Impressionist in verse should record his sensitivity to experience, not the experience itself; he should express the inexpressible. In the modern novel, 'Impressionism frequently refers to the technique of centering on the mental life of the chief character, rather than on the chief character or rather than on the reality around him. Writers such as Proust, Joyce and Virginia Woolf dwell on their character's memories, associations, and inner emotional reactions. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, for example, Joyce presents Stephen Dedalus' unarticulated feelings but little of physical surroundings.

9.10.7 Imagism

Imagism was a sub-genre of Modernism concerned with creating clear imagery with sharp language. The essential idea was to re-create the physical experience of an object through words. As with all of Modernism, Imagism implicitly rejected Victorian poetry, which tended toward narrative. In this way, Imagist poetry is similar to the Japanese Haiku; they are brief renderings of some sort of poetic scene. Imagism was a movement in early 20th-century poetry that favoured precision of imagery and clear, sharp language. It is considered to be the first organised modernist literary movement in the English language. The Imagists rejected the sentiment and discursiveness typical of Romantic and Victorian poetry. In contrast to the contemporary Georgian poets, who were generally content to work within that tradition, Imagists called for a return to more Classical values, such as directness of presentation, economy of language, and a willingness to experiment with non-traditional verse forms; Imagists used free verse. A characteristic feature of the form is its attempt to isolate a single image to reveal its essence. A

strand of modernism, Imagism was officially launched in 1912 when Ezra Pound read and marked up a poem by Hilda Doolittle, signed it "H. D. Imagiste," and sent it to Harriet Monroe at Poetry magazine. The movement sprang from ideas developed by T. E. Hulme, who - as early as 1908 - was proposing to the Poets' Club in London a poetry based on absolutely accurate presentation of its subject with no excess verbiage. The first tenet of the Imagist manifesto was "To use the language of common speech, but to employ always the exact word, not the nearly-exact, nor the merely decorative word."

9.10.8 Realism

Realism is a kind of literature that presents ordinary day-to-day experiences as they occur in reality. Realism is conveyed through the stylistic elements and the language used in a literary text. In works of realism, language is usually accessible and succinct, depicting people one would encounter in day-to-day life and everyday experience. Realism shies away from elaborate expression and instead focuses on reflecting the truth. Literary realism is part of the realist art movement that started in nineteenth-century France and lasted until the early twentieth century. It began as a reaction to eighteenth-century Romanticism and the rise of the bourgeois in Europe. Works of Romanticism were thought to be too exotic and to have lost touch with the real world. The writer Stendhal created pioneering works that realistically portrayed French life. He and others drew on the then-emerging fields of biology and psychology - as well as history, sociology, and the advancing Industrial Age - to craft stories and characters with whom the average reader could identify. Realism did not remain a uniquely French phenomenon. It spread throughout Europe, with works like British author George Eliot's *Middlemarch,* and eventually the United States. William Dean Howells's *The Rise of Silas Lapham,* Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,* Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage,* and Horatio Alger Jr.'s *Ragged Dick* all depict realistic characters from various pockets of American life as they grapple with war, racism, materialism, and upward mobility.

9.11 LET'S SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed in detail about the Modernism, Modern English literature and its socio, political, aesthetic and cultural background. We further discussed the important events of the twentieth century like inflation, its resultant economic depression, the World Wars, the importance of social security, development of education, culture, architecture and the advance of science and technology. This discussion also covered the sections like: key features of the age and literary features of the modern English literature. The two world wars left indelible impressions on the face of human history. These wars ruined almost greater part of the world and in these circumstances the whole human race suffered a lot.

9.12 QUESTIONS

- What is modernism?
- How have the world wars changed the social and political structure of the English society?
- How the world wars ended the British imperialism?
- What is the Stream of Consciousness technique?
- What is Realism in literature?
- What is Absurdism?
- Write a short note on Commonwealth?

9.13 FURTHER READINGS

- A.C. Baugh, Literary History of England. Vol. IV.
- A Short History of English Literature by Ifor Evans.
- Critical Approaches to Literature by David Daiches.
- Social and Literary History of England by J.N. Mundra & S.C. Mundra.
- The Norton Anthology of English Literature. Volume I, by W.W. Norton & Company.
- WWW. Algappauniversity.ac.in
- WWW.jammuuniversity.ac.in
- History of English Literature by Edward Albert.
- English Literature: Its History and Significance by William J. Long.
- History of English Literature by Legouis and Cazamian.
- A Handbook of Literary Terms by M.H. Abrams

UNIT- 10 MAJOR MODERN POETS

10.0 OBJECTIVES

After a careful study of this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the nature of the modern poetry and its functions.
- Identify key modernist poets and their contributions to English literature.
- Understand the major themes and stylistic innovations in modernist poetry.
- Analyse the complex rubric of modern poetry.
- Analyse selected works of modernist poets and appreciate their significance.

10.1 INTRODUCTION

The modernist period in English literature, spanning roughly from the late 19th century to the mid-20th century, was marked by radical changes in style, form, and thematic concerns. Modernist poets broke away from traditional forms and conventions, experimenting with new techniques and exploring complex themes such as dislocation, fragmentation, and the search for meaning in a rapidly

changing world. Modern poetry, of which T. S. Eliot is the chief representative, has followed entirely a different tradition from the Romantic and Victorian tradition of poetry. Every age has certain ideas about poetry, especially regarding the essentially poetical subjects, the poetical materials and the poetical modes. So the twentieth century needed poets who were fully alive to what was happening around them, and who had the courage and technique to express it.

The great poetical problem in the beginning of the twentieth century was, therefore, to invent technique that would be adequate to the ways of feeling, or modes of experience of the modern adult sensitive mind. The importance of T. S. Eliot lies in the fact that gifted with a mind of rare distinction; he has solved his own problem as a poet. It is mainly due to him that all serious modern poets and critics have realised that English poetry must develop along some other line than that running from the Romantics to Tennyson, Swinburne and Rupert Brooke.

The twentieth century poets who were in revolt against Victorianism and especially against the didactic tendency of poets like Tennyson, Browning, Arnold and even Swinburne and Meredith, felt that the poet's business was to be uniquely himself, and to project his personality through the medium of his art. Poetry to them was not a medium for philosophy and other extraneous matters; nor was it singing for its own sake. It was a method first of discovering one's self, and then a means of projecting this discovery. On account of the change in the conceptions of the function of poetry, it was essential that a new technique of communicating meaning be discovered to express the changing scenario. It was this necessity which brought about the movements known as imagism and symbolism in modern poetry. The 20th century English poetry was a poetry of realism mixed with disillusionment and pessimism. The suffering and tragedy that marked the modern life was of great interest to the poets of this era especially as there was no longer any spiritual essence in the modern life. Modern poets were also interested in nature because this was the beauty and essence they could easily identify with.

10.2 MAJOR MODERN POETS

10.2.1 Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936)

Joseph Rudyard Kipling was an English journalist, novelist, poet, and short-story writer. He was born in British India, which inspired much of his work. He was born on 30th December 1865 at Bombay, in the Bombay Presidency of British India, to Alice Kipling and John Lockwood Kipling. His father, John Lockwood Kipling, a sculptor and pottery designer, was the Principal and Professor of Architectural Sculpture at the newly founded Sir Jamsetjee Jeejebhoy School of Art in Bombay. Alice was a vivacious woman of whom Lord Dufferin would say, "Dullness and Mrs. Kipling cannot exist in the same room."

Much of his childhood was unhappy. Kipling was taken to England by his parents at the age of six and was left for five years at a foster home at Southsea, the horrors of which he described in the story "Baa Baa, Black Sheep" (1888). He then went on to the United Services College at Westward Ho, north Devon, a new, inexpensive, and inferior boarding school. It haunted Kipling for the rest of his life. Kipling returned to India in 1882 and worked for seven years as a journalist. In 1892 Kipling married Caroline Balestier, the sister of Wolcott Balestier, an American publisher and writer with whom he had collaborated in *The Naulahka* (1892), a facile and unsuccessful romance. That year the young couple moved to the United States and settled on Mrs. Kipling's property in Vermont, but their manners and attitudes were considered objectionable by their neighbours. Unable or unwilling to adjust to life in America, the Kiplings returned to England in 1896. Ever after Kipling remained very aware that Americans were "foreigners," and he extended to them, as to the French, no more than a semi-exemption from his proposition that only "lesser breeds" are born beyond the English Channel. His literary fame brought him many honours, including the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1907.

As a poet Kipling claims credit for reintroducing realism and a racy vigour into the verse of the

nineties. At his best he achieves genuine poetry; at his worst he can be mechanically and stridently crude. He lacks delicacy of touch. He is a ceaseless experimenter in verse forms and rhythms, and his main themes are those of his prose works. His verse is to be found in *Departmental Ditties* (1886); *Barrack-room Ballads* (1892); *The Seven Seas* (1896); *The Five Nations* (1903); *Inclusive Verse*, 1885-1918 (1919) and *Poems*, 1886-1929 (1930).

On the night of 12 January 1936, he suffered a haemorrhage in his small intestine. He underwent surgery, but died at Middlesex Hospital in London less than a week later on 18 January 1936, at the age of 70. Kipling's body lay in state in the Fitzrovia Chapel, part of Middlesex Hospital, after his death, and is commemorated with a plaque near the altar. Kipling was cremated at Golders Green Crematorium in north-west London, and his ashes interred at Poets'Corner, part of the south transept of Westminster Abbey, next to the graves of Charles Dickens and Thomas Hardy.

10.2.2 Robert Bridges (1844-1930)

The wish of Bridges that no biography of him should be published has left us with only the major facts of his life. He was born at Walmer, in Kent, of a well-to-do country family, and both the county of his birth and the good fortune which made it unnecessary for him to earn a living have left indelible marks on his work. In 1854 he went to Eton, and from there to Oxford in 1863. At both places he showed considerable academic prowess. He began as a medical student at St Bartholomew's Hospital, London, in 1869, proceeded to his M.B. in 1874, and was for three years (1878-81) a practising physician in London hospitals. An attack of pneumonia then brought his medical career to a close, and he retired to Yattendon, in Berkshire. He was an unsuccessful candidate for the Oxford chair of poetry in 1895, and twelve years later he moved to Chilswell, on the outskirts of Oxford, where he lived until his death, enjoying the friendship of many of the finest minds of his generation in an atmosphere here of peace and prosperous, cultured leisure. He was made Poet Laureate in 1913, and in the same year helped to found the Society for Pure English.

Though Bridges was writing poetry while still at Eton, little of his earliest work survives. His first volume, *Shorter Poems*, appeared anonymously in 1873, and further volumes under the same title were added in 1879, 1880, 1890, and 1894. They contained many of his best-known lyrics-*A Passer-by, London Snow, I will not let thee go,* and *The Downs*. His subjects, mainly love and nature, are handled with flawless taste and restraint, and with the delicate artistry of an accomplished technician. His is the art which conceals art, and his mastery of rhythms, asure ear for verbal music, and lightness of touch give to these lyrics something of the quality of the best Elizabethan songs. His sonnet sequence, *The Growth of Love,* privately printed in 1876, was published in 1889 after many alterations. The seventy- nine sonnets, a mixture of Petrarchan and Shakespearian forms, have all the technical excellence which we expect of Bridges, but they lack depth of feeling. *Prometheus the Firegiver* (1883) and *Eros and Psyche* (1885) are elaborate but over-lengthy poems.

A long period, mainly devoted to poetic drama and literary criticism, intervened before New Poems (1899), a volume, which, though it contains some good landscapes and wonderfully clear recollections of his youth, is below the usual standard of Bridges. In Poems in *Classical Prosody* (1903) and *Later Poems* (1914) the poet enters the fields of politics and war, subjects which, as Bridges handles them, are unworthy of the technical skill lavished upon them. These volumes contain much of his poorest work. *October and Other Poems* (1920) and *New Verse* (1925) again show Bridges as a great lyric poet. In 1929 his long philosophical poem *The Testament of Beauty* was published, showing beauty as the supreme force in life.

10.2.3 William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)

William Butler Yeats is widely considered to be one of the greatest poets of the 20th century. He belonged to the Protestant, Anglo-Irish minority that had controlled the economic, political, social,

and cultural life of Ireland since at least the end of the 17th century. He was an Irish poet, dramatist and writer, and one of the foremost figures of 20th-century literature. He was a driving force behind the Irish Literary Revival, and along with Lady Gregory founded the Abbey Theatre, serving as its chief during its early years.

William Butler Yeats was born in Sandymount in County Dublin, Ireland. His father, John Butler Yeats, was a painter of modest success, and belonged to a respected family line of Protestant aristocrats and clergymen. William's mother, Susan Mary Pollexfen, from Sligo, came from a wealthy merchant family, who owned a milling and shipping business. Soon after William's birth, the family relocated to the Pollexfen home at Merville, Sligo, to stay with her extended family, and the young poet came to think of the area as his childhood and spiritual home. Its landscape became, over time, both personally and symbolically, his "country of the heart". So too did its location by the sea; John Yeats stated that "by marriage with a Pollexfen, we have given a tongue to the sea cliffs". Though qualified as a barrister, the poet's father decided to move to London with a hope to become a painter. However, Susan Yeats, unhappy with her husband's decision, chose to live for some months every year from 1867 to 1873 at Sligo. Living with his grandparents and uncles at seaside Sligo, and with his father in London, Yeats and his five siblings came into contact with two completely different worlds- urban and the centre of colonial Britain, London, and the typical Irish rural world, that evoked his postcolonial imagination quite early in life. It is this contrast, which made him express his feelings on the theme of Nature versus Civilisation in his Famous short poem 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree'.

A common symposium of poets, writers, and philosophers at Bedford Park acquaints him to George Bernard Shaw, W. E. Henley, Oscar Wilde, Ernest Rhys, Lionel Johnson, Ernest Dowson, Arthur Symons, James O' Grady and William Ferguson. John O'Leary made him understand the importance of Irish national literature, which inspired Yeats to write poems on Irish folklore, legends and ballads. Yeats' poetic corpus displays a wide range of influences, personal, cultural, political and historical; and the commitment to Ireland has helped him to coordinate with them. Gradually, he become a leading figure in the Irish cultural revival. He was the founding member of establishing Irish Literary Society in London and of National Literary Society in Dublin. His nationalism had been triggered by his love of country's folk traditions, legends, and verses and he expresses them in his "Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry" (1888), "Irish Fairy Tales" (1892), "A Book of Irish Verse" (1895). Being convinced that modern civilization effaces our fundamental consciousness of ourselves, Yeats trusted in the faculty of imagination, and admired those ages when imagination reigned supreme. Thus he went deeper and farther in the range of folk-lore and mythology. He discovered the primitive and perennial throb of life in passions and beliefs of ancient times, and he wanted to revive it, because he felt that modern civilization has tamed it by its insistence on dry logic and cold reason. He married George Hyde- Lees after he had proposed and been rejected before by other women. His works were enriched with the use of myths and symbols which were regarded as complex. In 1881, financial hardships forced the family to return to Ireland. They took a cottage in Howth, a village on the sea shore, some 10 miles northeast of Dublin. The young Yeats accompanied his father daily to London by train, where in his studio; the father read aloud poems of Shakespeare, Byron, Shelley, and Keats. Yeats grew fascinated with Blake, Shelley and Byron, as the romantic wielded great influence on his poetic sensibility early on. He wrote in their imitation. As a boy, he was captivated by Shelley's Alastor, a poem about the idealist and passionately romantic as well as visionary hero, also a poet, who turns his back upon the world completely disillusioned with it. Yeats's romantic tendencies, his belief in imagination, and his belief in poetry and literature as the truest form of self-expression led him to regard himself as the most authentic voice of Irish renaissance or the Irish Literary Revival. His reading of the romantics and the Irish oral folklore had produced in him a strong belief in spiritual self as against the intellect, the former he identified with Ireland and the latter with Britain.

The collected edition of Yeats' poems can be divided into two sections: lyrical and narrative. The narrative and dramatic section is about one-fourth of the entire collection and contains six tales: *The Wanderings of Oisin* (1889), *The Old Age of Queen Maeve* (1903), *Baile and Aillinn* (1903), *The Shadowy Waters* (1906), *The Two Kings* (1914), *The Gift of Harun Al-Rashid* (1923). The lyrical section consists of twelve collections with the following titles: *Crossways* (1889), *The Rose* (1893), *The Wind Among the Reeds* (1899), *The Seven Woods* (1903), *The Green Helmet and Other Poems* (1910), *Responsibilities* (1914), *The Wild Swans at Coole* (1919), *Michael Robartes and The Dancer* (1921), *The Tower* (1928), *The Winding Stair and Other Poems* (1929), *A Full Moon in March* (1935), *Last Poems* (1940).

Yeats was bestowed the Noble Prize for Literature in 1923. However, some of his best poems were yet to be written. For all his life, Yeats had been working on a system of thought, a metaphysical framework that was antithetical to the reason dominated modern Western thought. He found no solace in Christianity, and hence ruminated Neo-Platonism, occultism, theosophy, kabalistic thought, Rosicrucian systems, mysticism, Indian philosophy etc., for an alternate system that would provide symbols to his poetry. He also learnt spiritualism from Mohini Chatterjee, the Indian theosophist. With Madame Blavatsky, he experimented in occultism, particularly the telepathic connections with the immortal Tibetan saints. Yeats had already learnt a great deal from Indian philosophy. He had read the *Upanishads* as well as Patanjali's *Yoga-sutra-s* with his Indian guru, Purohit Swami. Yeats wrote 'Preface' to the former, and 'Introduction' to the latter, when his guru translated these works. It was his interest in the Indian philosophical traditions that had inspired him to receive Tagore's *Gitanjali* with great excitement in 1912-13.He died in 1939 and W.H Auden wrote an elegy for him "In Memory of W.B Yeats".

Salient Features of Yeats' Poetry

Romanticism

Often Yeats is also termed as 'The last of the Romantics' because of the visionary and mystic quality of his poems. He is a spokesperson of the modern sensibilities and yet had a kind of mysticism in his poems. He is found to be deeply influenced with ideals of the Romantic poets particularly William Blake and P.B. Shelley. W.B. Yeats employs the term 'Romanticism' in two different contexts, one when he refers to literary condition in one of his well-known poems titled "September 1913": "Romantic Ireland's dead and gone, /It's with O'Leary in the grave" and another in a political situation which he explains in " Coole Park and Ballylee, 1931":

> We were the last romantic-choose for theme
> Traditional sanctity and loveliness;
> Whatever's written in what poet's name.
> The book of the people; whatever most can bless
> The mind of man or elevate a rhyme.

William Butler Yeats does not only seem to be deeply influenced by the underlying features of 'Romanticism' but he also imitates them and shapes his literary firmament. He appears to be echoing the sounds of P.B. Shelley's poetic compositions and prose works. He too believes in the basic tenets of Shelley's "A Defence of Poetry" and hence by believing that the poet is an unacknowledged legislator of the world, he intertwines art with politics. He instrumentally employs art in the service of creating a particular kind of consciousness and ideology which may make the people aware of their myth, legend and culture which may further help the people to defy the dogmatic and oppressive

colonial and dogmatic social, political, and economic order. On the contrary, he also imitates the platonic philosophy of Beauty and aesthetics which P.B. Shelley divulges in his "A Hymn to Intellectual Beauty". His Rose poems reinstate the platonic philosophy of truth and beauty. Yeats imbibes the Blakeian philosophy of contraries and hence he also believes that there is no progression without contraries.

Symbolism

Symbolism is an essential attribute of the modernist poetry and Yeats was one of the greatest of the symbolist poets of the modern age. Yeats was an anti-rationalist. He believed in magic, occult influences and hypnotism. He thus led the 'revolt of the soul against the intellect', in the hope to acquire 'a more conscious exercise of the human faculties'. He also believed in the magic of words, the phrases and terms which appeal to common humanity. Therefore, he tried to rediscover those symbols which had a popular appeal in ancient days, and which can even now touch man's hidden selves and awaken in him his deepest and oldest consciousness of love and death, or his impulse towards adventure and self-fulfillment. Being disillusioned by lack of harmony and strength in modern culture, he tried to revive the ancient spells and incantations to bring about unity and a spirit of integration in modern civilization which was torn by conflicts and dissensions. All these factors inclined Yeats towards symbolism. Believing in the existence of a universal 'great mind', and a 'great memory' which could be 'evoked by symbols', he came to regard that both imagery and rhythm can work as incantations to rouse universal emotions. He liked Shelley's poetry because of the symbolism inherent in the recurrent images of leaves, boats, stars, caves, and the moon. He found that Blake invented his own symbols, but his own task was easier because he could draw freely on Irish mythology for the symbols he required. Coming under the influence of French Symbolists like Verlaine and Maeterlinck, he tried to substitute the wavering, meditative and organic rhythms, which are the embodiment of imagination, for those energetic rhythms as of a running man which are not suited to serious poetry. As a symbolist poet Yeats' aim was to evoke a complex of emotions not by a direct statement but by a multitude of indirect strokes. The result is that sometimes the symbols used by him are not clear as they have been derived from certain obscure sources. For example, the symbols used in the following lines from The Poet Pleads with the Elemental Powers demand a commentary:

Do you not hear me calling white deer with no horns?

I have been changed to a hound with one red ear!

I would that the Boar without bristles had come from the west

And had rooted the sun and moon and stars out of the sky

And lay in the darkness, grunting, and turning to his rest.

In most of his poems, however, the symbols used by Yeats are obvious. One very common symbol in his poetry is 'the moon', which stands for life's mystery.

Mysticism

Mysticism is an essential attribute of Yeats' poetry as he was a mystic and visionary by temperament. In a world dominated by materialism, industrialization, rationalism, science and technology, Yeats maintained his position of a mystic which is one of the most essential attributes of his Celticism. He met numerous Irish relatives and acquaintances who claimed to have had mystical experiences which attracted him and hence he moved towards mysticism and occultism: this became his life-long preoccupation. Once, he records, "the mystical life is the centre of all that I do" which further brings him to join the Theosophical society, founded by Madame Helena Blavatsky. This makes him familiar with the ideas that the world is a conflict of opposites, that the soul undergoes a cycle of reincarnation, and that each soul is a part of a universal soul or great mind. Gradually, this

becomes a major motif of his poetic corpus. Some of his mystical ideas have eventually been collected in the volume called *A Vision*.

10.2.4 Siegfried Sassoon (1886-1967)

Siegfried Sassoon was born to a Jewish father and an Anglo-Catholic mother, and grew up in the neo-gothic mansion named Weirleigh in Matfield, Kent. His father, Alfred Ezra Sassoon was a member of the wealthy Baghdadi Jewish Sassoon merchant family. Siegfried's mother, Theresa, belonged to the Thornycroft family, sculptors responsible for many of the best-known statues in London. He based nearly all his most worth-while work on his experiences in the War. Educated at Marlborough and Cambridge, he saw infantry service in Western Europe and Palestine and was decorated for gallantry. First-hand knowledge of the conditions of trench warfare produced in him a bitter disillusionment, a brief period as a conscientious objector, and, above all, a determination to shock the people at home into a realisation of the ghastly truth. *Counter-attack* (1918), a collection of violent, embittered poems, confirmed the notoriety which had rapidly grown out of his occasional writings for periodicals, and it is still the best known of his collections of poetry. With a studied bluntness and often a provocative coarseness of language, Sassoon painted the horrors of life and death in the trenches, dug-outs, and hospitals, and a merciless and calculated realism gave to his work a vitality not previously found in English war poetry. Some critics have found his horrors mechanical or exaggerated, but he still maintains his reputation among readers of poetry. Should that eventually decline, to his credit will always remain the fact that his was the work to inspire the greatest of all the war poets, Wilfred Owen. In a similar vein to Counter-attack, though less successful, were *War Poems* (1919) and *Satirical Poems* (1926), but his more recent volumes, *The Heart's Journey* (1928) and *Vigils* (1935), were more concerned with attempts to capture for his reader momentary impressions of beauty. *Collected Poems* was published in 1947.

His style is simple, lucid, and most appealing, and his handling of language betrays the poet's great sensitivity. A lover of the countryside, of rural sports, of music and painting, Sassoon represented a class which is now fast disappearing, and his work gives an admirable picture of a life of cultured leisure.

10.2.5 Rupert Brooke (1887-1915)

Rupert Chawner Brooke was an English poet known for his idealistic war sonnets written during the First World War, especially "The Soldier". He was also known for his boyish good looks, which were said to have prompted the Irish poet W. B. Yeats to describe him as "the handsomest young man in England". He died of septicaemia following a mosquito bite whilst aboard a French hospital ship moored off the island of Skyros in the Aegean Sea. He was the third of four children of William Parker "Willie" Brooke, a schoolmaster, and Ruth Mary Brooke, a school matron. Both parents were working at Fettes College in Edinburgh when they met. Brooke made friends among the Bloomsbury group of writers, some of whom admired his talent while others were more impressed by his good looks. He also belonged to another literary group known as the Georgian Poets and was one of the most important of the Dymock poets, associated with the Gloucestershire village of Dymock where he spent some time before the war. This group included both Robert Frost and Edward Thomas.

Though his war poetry is small in bulk, Brooke is usually considered typical of the early group of war poets, perhaps because his sonnet, "If I should die, think only this of me," has appeared in so many anthologies of twentieth- century verse. Educated at Rugby and Cambridge, Brooke began to write poetry while still at the University. In 1911 he settled at Grantchester, the village near Cambridge which he was to immortalise in "The Old Vicarage, Grantchester," and then during 1913-14 he travelled in America and the South Seas. He joined the Army in 1914, and in the following year died

on active service at Scyros, in the Mediterranean. Brooke's poetry is essentially that of a young, cultured man of leisure. His earliest work betrays something of the affected cynicism of the decadents, but, after a brief and not very successful excursion into the fields of cruder realism, he turned to nature and simple pleasures as his chief inspirations. On these and themes of similar simplicity, Brooke wrote with a youthful, healthy joy in life, a subtlety of observation, and an appreciation of natural beauty, which found for his work a ready place in Georgian Poetry. Like Davies, however, he seldom delved below external appearances, and the thought underlying his work usually lacks depth and originality. The ease and limpid simplicity of his verse, partly the result of considerable metrical skill, are eminently suited to his subjects. A reputation for sentimentality, and the reaction against his attitude to war have resulted in a sharp decline in his once great popularity; but his faults were largely those of youth, and his qualities suggest that he had considerable potentialities.

His poetry was published in *Poems* (1911); 1914 *and other Poems* (1915); and *Collected Poems* (1918). His one critical work, *John Webster and the Elizabethan Drama* (1916), indicates a real appreciation of the dramatist and his period.

10.2.6 Wilfred Owen (1893-1918)

He was the greatest of the war poets. He was born at Oswestry and educated at Birkenhead and London University, and, after spending some time as a tutor in France, he served as an infantry officer from 1915 until his death. He was awarded the Military Cross. As early as 1910 Owen was writing verse in the romantic tradition of Keats and Tennyson, and the influence of French poetry, the product of his stay in France, was never completely shaken off. But the work by which he lives was all produced after his meeting in 1917 with Sassoon. His experience of the trenches had brought him rapidly to maturity, and Sassoon set his feet on the path which he himself had already taken. With a frank realism, free from the violent bitterness of so much of Sassoon's poetry, Owen set out to present the whole reality of war – the boredom, the hopelessness, the futility, the horror, occasionally the courage and self-sacrifice, but, above all, the pity of it. He himself wrote: "I am not concerned with Poetry. My subject is War, and the pity of War. The Poetry is in the pity." And never has the pity of war been more deeply felt or more powerfully shown. Though his satire is often sharp, he never loses his artistic poise, and his most bitter work has a dignity which is truly great.

A gifted artist with a fine feeling for words and a subtle rhythmic sense, Owen was a ceaseless experimenter in verse techniques. Probably the most influential part of his technique was the para-rhyme, which was so enthusiastically adopted by later poets. Indeed, Owen's influence on these writers was very great in spite of the slimness of the volume of his poems, which were collected and published by Siegfried Sassoon in 1920. In both technique and mood the post-War generation found in him a congenial spirit, and it is tempting, though profitless, to speculate on what he might have become had he not, by a cruel blow of fate, been killed in action just seven days before the Armistice. *The Poems of Wilfred Owen* (1931) is a much more complete collection of his works and contains an excellent memoir by Edmund Blunden.

10.2.7 David Herbert Lawrence (1885-1930)

He was an English short story writer, novelist, poet, playwright, literary critic, travel writer, essayist, and painter. His modernist works reflect on modernity, social alienation and industrialization, while championing sexuality, vitality and instinct. The fourth child of Arthur John Lawrence, a barely literate miner at Brinsley Colliery, and Lydia Beardsall, a former pupil-teacher who had been forced to perform manual work in a lace factory due to her family's financial difficulties, Lawrence spent his formative years in the coal mining town of Eastwood, Nottinghamshire. The house in which he was born, is now his Birthplace Museum.

D. H. Lawrence was the most striking figure in the literary world between the two Wars. He was

educated at Nottingham High School. On leaving school he had a brief experience of business life, and then became a pupil teacher in his native village. He trained for the teachers' certificate at University College, Nottingham, and then was for some time a teacher in Croydon. He married Frieda Weekley, a German, and previously wife of a Nottingham Professor. Because of his attitude toward the War and his wife's nationality, he was cruelly persecuted. The police, made Lawrence try to leave England. His passport was withheld, however, and it was 1919 before he got away. From then on his life was a continuous search, in many parts of the world, for a society more suited to one of his ideals-Italy, Malta, Ceylon, Australia, California, and New Mexico were among the places where he lived. The young Lawrence attended Beauvale Board School from 1891 until 1898, becoming the first local pupil to win a county council scholarship to Nottingham High School in nearby Nottingham. He left in 1901, working for three months as a junior clerk at Haywood's surgical appliances factory, but a severe bout of pneumonia ended this career.

Lawrence experienced his first encounter with tensions between Germany and France when he was arrested and accused of being a British spy, before being released following an intervention from Frieda's father. After this incident, Lawrence left for a small hamlet to the south of Munich where he was joined by Frieda for their honeymoon, later memorialised in the series of love poems titled *Look! We Have Come Through* (1917). Lawrence continued to write despite his failing health. In his last months he wrote numerous poems, reviews and essays. After being discharged from a sanatorium, he died on 2 March 1930 at the Villa Robermond in Vence, France, from complications of tuberculosis. Frieda commissioned an elaborate headstone for his grave bearing a mosaic of his adopted emblem of the phoenix.

Among his vast collection of novel, short story and drama following is the list of his poetical works:

- Love Poems and others (1913)
- Amores (1916)
- Look! We have come through! (1917)
- New Poems (1918)
- Bay: a book of poems (1919)
- Tortoises (1921)
- Birds, Beasts and Flowers (1923)
- The Collected Poems of D H Lawrence (1928)
- Pansies (1929)
- Nettles (1930)
- Last Poems (1932)
- Sn*ake and Other* Poems

10.2.8 Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888-1965)

He is one of the most remarkable of English poets. He had great influence on poetry for more than forty years. He sees poetry and ceremony as forces that can give meaning to the emptiness and confusion of the modern world. He gives great importance to the forces that make it possible for spiritual as well as physical life to continue. T.S. Eliot was born in St. Louis Missouri, in an intellectually enriched and economically empowered family where his grandfather was a man of letters and his father Henry Eliot, a poet and his mother, a social activist. He was admitted to a school at St.

Louis where he studied till 1905. Later he joined Harvard University where he acquainted himself with a wide variety of subjects beginning from language and literature to some classics and where he also developed a keen interest in comparative literature and finally he got graduated from Harvard in 1910. In 1911, he came in contact with certain philosophers and men of literary interest which encouraged him to study Indian philosophy and Sanskrit literature at Harvard. His works are much influenced by the poetry of Dante, John Donne and John Webster. T.S. Eliot was seen as a highly intellectual and difficult poet. He was a playwright, literary critic and poet. He is believed to have transformed how poetry was being written and understood. "The Wasteland" published in 1922 was seen as the longest poem in English language. T.S. Eliot published "Four Quartets" in 1943. His works are experimental in style and diction. In his poems, Eliot depicts ugly realities of urban life and decline of Western civilization using fragmentary images. In most of the poems Eliot wrote after 1927 when he joined the Church of England, he often stressed belief in spiritual comfort. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1948. The poetic career of T.S.Eliot can be visualized through five distinct phases as follows:

The First Phase (1905-09)

This period in Eliot's life is seen as the period of his juvenilia in which he published some poems in several college and school magazines. The poems of this period are:

A Fable for Feasters, Before Morning, On a portrait, Spleen.

The Second Phase (1909-1917)

Some important poems of this period are: "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" "Portrait of a Lady", "The Preludes", "Rhapsody on a Windy Night", "The Boston Evening Transcript", "Mr. Apollinax."

The Third Phase (1918-1925)

Some important poems of this phase are: "Gerontion", "Burbank with a Baedekar", "Sweeney Erect", "A Cooking Egg", "Sweeney among the Nightingales", "The Waste Land", and The Hollow Men".

The Fourth Phase (1925-35)

The more characteristic poems of this Christian period are: "Ash Wednesday", "Journey of the Magi", "Animula", "Marina", "Choruses from The Rock", "Coriolanus".

The Fifth Phase (1935-43)

This is the period of the Four Quartets, which were published as follows: "Burnt Norton", "East Coker", "The Dry Savages", and "Little Gidding".

10.2.9 W.H. Auden (1907-1973)

Auden's poetic career spans about four decades from the late 1920s up to early 1970s. Auden's was a versatile literary talent and besides writing much for a living and compiling several anthologies. Auden's poetry contains the elements both of greatness and popularity that go to make him the pre-eminent poet of his age. If the topicality of his verse and the treatment in it of contemporary issues and problems enable him to hold a popular appeal, his delineation of human condition in general and his concern with deeper issues give his poetry an enduring quality. W. H. Auden is the leader of the Oxford Poets and therefore he showed much awareness about the disintegrating war-torn civilization of the early twentieth century. He knew very well that the world around him was full of political and social evils apart from the metaphysical anguishes that marred the modern existence and therefore in his poetic art it found a manifestation. He had a leaning towards the left politics and therefore thought

that leftist ideology is probably a solution to the political, social and cultural evils of the modern western society. In other words, it can be said that he was deeply influenced by the philosophy and writings of Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud.

Wystan Hugh Auden (W.H. Auden) was born in York on February, 21, 1907 in a professional middle class family. He was the third son of George Augustus and Constance Rosalie Auden. Auden's father was a Medical Officer and mother had been a nurse. Auden inherited much from his parents. The traits he imbibed from his parents went a long way in the making of Auden, the man. In him we find a combination of the scientific and rational attitude which he inherited from his father, and the humanitarian and religious learning, he imbibed from his mother. Auden's clinical approach to the problems of human life owes greatly to the direct impact of his father. We find that quite like a doctor he diagnoses the symptoms of a diseased individual as well as of disintegrating civilization and prescribes a remedy. In 1915, Auden was sent to St. Edmund's Preparatory School where he met Christopher Isherwood three years older than himself, and from 1920 to 1925 he was in Norfolk (at Gresham's School, Holt) where he specialized in biology. Auden went to Christ Church, Oxford in 1925 and remained there till 1928. At Oxford Auden became a legendary figure. Here at Oxford Auden seemingly studied a good deal of psychology. He conceived the poet as a detached, clinical analyst of men and society, diagnosing individual or social ills, and applying poetry to them as a sort of psychological therapy.

Economic pressures compelled Auden to return from Germany and he took up the job of a school master in England in 1930 at the Downs School, Colwall near Malvern. In the same year he published 'Poems' containing 'Paid on Both Sides': A charade and 30 poems. He published 'The Orators' (dedicated to Stephen Spender) in1932, and 'The Dance of Death' in 1933. In 1935 Auden collaborated with Christopher Isherwood on a play entitled 'The Dog Beneath the Skin' and worked for six months with G.P.O. Film Unit, collaborating with Benjamin Britten on Coal Face, Night Mail and other films. He also edited, with John Garrett, an anthology, The Poet's Tongue.

Auden immigrated to America in 1939 with Isherwood. In 1946 he became a citizen of the United States of America. Since his residence in the USA he has accomplished an enormous amount of varied literary work, collaborating frequently with writers and composers, and published an imposing amount of verse. In 1935 Auden married Erika Mann (1905–1969), the lesbian novelist daughter of Thomas Mann when it became apparent that the Nazis were intending to strip her of her German citizenship. Mann had asked Christopher Isherwood if he would marry her so she could become a British citizen. He declined but suggested she approach Auden, who readily agreed to a marriage of convenience. Mann and Auden never lived together, but remained on good terms throughout their lives and were still married when Mann died in 1969. She left him a small bequest in her will. In 1936, Auden introduced actress Therese Giehse, Mann's lover, to the writer John Hampson and they too married so that Giehse could leave Germany. Auden won the Pulitzer Prize in 1948 for The Age of Anxiety. Auden died at 66 of heart failure at the Altenburgerhof Hotel in Vienna overnight on 28–29 September 1973.

Auden published about four hundred poems, including seven long poems (two of them book-length). His poetry was encyclopaedic in scope and method, ranging in style from obscure twentieth-century modernism to the lucid traditional forms such as ballads and limericks,
from doggerel through haiku and villanelles to a "Christmas Oratorio" and a baroque eclogue in Anglo-Saxon meters. The tone and content of his poems ranged from pop-song cliches to complex philosophical meditations, from the corns on his toes to atoms and stars, from contemporary crises to the evolution of society. His best poetry is to be found in *Poems* (1930), *The Orators* (1932), *Look, Stranger* (1936), *New Year Letter* (1941), *The Age of Anxiety* (1948), *Collected Shorter Poems* 1930-1944 (1950). His two anthologies - *The Poet's Tongue* (1935) with John Garrett, and *The Oxford*

Book of Light Verse (1938) - greatly stimulated interest in popular literature which is a sincere expression of emotion even though it cannot be dignified by the name of poetry.

10.2.10 Ezra Pound (1885-1972)

Critic, poet, impresario, and propagandist, Ezra Pound was one of the shaping forces of modernism, with connections to the era's most influential writers of prose and poetry. In championing the liberatory effects of free verse and in skillfully practicing the techniques of collage and allusion, Pound placed a value on novelty and formal experimentation that helps define what we see as the avant-garde to this day. Pound was born in Hailey, Idaho in 1885 and raised in Wyncote, Pennsylvania. He studied Greek and Latin languages at Cheltenham before enrolling at the University of Pennsylvania, where he studied languages for two years before finishing his studies at Hamilton College. He traveled throughout Europe in 1908, visiting Italy, Spain, and England. During this time, he became interested in Chinese and Japanese poetry, an interest that would last throughout his creative life and help marshal his disparate interests into a disciplined aesthetic. His 1909 collection of poems, *Personae*, showed his deep engagement with both traditional lyrical forms, like the dramatic monologue, and radically new forms of expression.

Of the Imagist poets only Pound gained lasting fame, not only as a poet but as one who helped many other writers to achieve their best work. Born in the U.S.A., he lived in London from 1908 to 1920, then in Paris, and from1924 to 1945 in Italy. His admiration of Mussolini resulted in his being charged with treason at the end of the War. Considered unfit to plead, he was held prisoner in hospital until 1958, a forlorn scapegoat for the sins of fascism. He was always a centre of controversy because of his iconoclastic views on everything from poetry to economics (often founded on half-knowledge or a perverse determination to be different), but his influence on contemporary literature was exemplified by the homage paid to him by T. S. Eliot. Pound's translations from Italian, Provencal, Latin, etc., were far from accurate, but they recreated the spirit of the originals; he re-established the epigram as a verse form, strengthened by the influence of Japanese. To him poetry was the embodiment of melody, images, and provocative thought - basics of most good poetry – but they produced an 'originality' in Pound's verse which Eliot considered lacking in most poetry of the past century.

In 1917, Pound became the London editor of The Little Review, largely determining the content of this most influential of modernist publications and securing a regular place of publication for Joyce, Eliot, and Lewis in its pages. In 1920, he moved away from London to Paris. In 1924, he moved yet again, this time to Italy, where he would live for the next twenty years. Living in London, Paris, and Italy, Pound wrote some of the most challenging, beautiful poetry of the era, including his at times ribald, at times doleful *Homage to Sextus Propertius* (1919) and one of his true masterpieces, *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (1920).

Pound's life in Italy was largely devoted to writing *The Cantos* which appeared in part by part and were always in the process of being revised; eventually they remained unfinished. They were a vast survey of history from his own very limited and biased point of view; they were extremely erudite, highly allusive, and expressive of personal, often fragmented, experiences, in a compaction of images made all the more bewildering because of their references to foreign languages and literatures. When he was in prison awaiting trial, he was deprived of books; thus he was forced to rely on his own mind and personality for emotional sustenance. It shares some of the features of The Waste Land, but it shores its fragments on a much greater scale. (Canto VIII begins with a reference to Eliot: "These fragments you have shored (shelved)." It makes use of quotation and allusion to other poets in a method that somewhat resembles cubist collage, but at epic length. *The Pisan Cantos* (1948) which resulted may be considered his best; certainly they are the most attractive, because of their sympathy for humanity and the sheer beauty of their words. For the *Pisan Cantos*, Pound was awarded the

Bollingen Prize causing great controversy. Pound's survey of contemporary society and its problems was published between 1925 and 1969; a very necessary annotated index came out in 1958 before the appearance of the last twenty-one Cantos. No matter how confused were Pound's political ideas, and despite the increasingly personal and elliptical language he employed, he was a poet till the very end.

Pound's published books include *A lume Spento* (1908), *Exultations* (1909), *Personae* (1909), *Provenca* (1910), *Canzoni* (1911), *Lustra and Other Poems* (1917), *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (1920), *Umbra: Collected Poems* (1920), *Cantos I-XVI* (1925), *A Draft of XXX Cantos* (1930), *Homage to Sextus Propertius* (1934), *The Fifth Decade of Cantos* (1937), *Cantos LII-LXXI* (1940), *The Pisan Cantos* (1948), *Patria Mia* (1950), and *The Cantos* (1972). Ezra Pound's greatest legacy lies in his advancement of many of the famous modernist writers of the 20th century.

10.2.11 Philip Larkin (1922-1985)

Larkin was the most eminent writer of post-war Britain, whose capabilities ranged into the spheres of poetry, novel and criticism. His influence was so strong that he was referred to as "England's other Poet Laureate", a position which he had turned down when it was offered to him at the demise of John Betjeman, who was then, the poet laureate. Critic Alan Brown John notes in his book *Philip Larkin* that he produced "the most technically brilliant and resonantly beautiful, profoundly disturbing yet appealing and approachable, body of verse" and was considered an "artist of the first rank" by reviewer John Press.

Philip Larkin was born on 9 August 1922 in Coventry, the only son and younger child of Sydney Larkin (1884–1948), who came from Lichfield, and his wife, Eva Emily Day (1886–1977) of Epping. The family lived in Radford, Coventry, until Larkin was five years old, before moving to a large three-storey middle-class house complete with servants' quarters near to Coventry railway station and King Henry VIII School, in Manor Road. Having survived the bombings of the Second World War their former house in Manor Road was demolished in the 1960s to make way for a road modernization programme, the construction of an inner ring road.

Larkin's early childhood was in some respects unusual: he was educated at home until the age of eight by his mother and sister, neither friends nor relatives ever visited the family home, and he developed a stammer. Although home life was relatively cold, Larkin enjoyed support from his parents. From the junior school he progressed to King Henry VIII Senior School. He fared quite poorly when he sat his School Certificate exam at the age of 16. Despite his results, he was allowed to stay at school; two years later he earned distinctions in English and History, and passed the entrance exams for St John's College, Oxford, to read.

In 1943 Larkin was appointed as librarian of the public library in Wellington, Shropshire. It was while working there that in early 1944 he met his first girlfriend, Ruth Bowman, an academically ambitious 16-year-old schoolgirl. In 1945, Ruth went to continue her studies at King's College London; during one of his visits their friendship developed into a sexual relationship. Larkin began at Oxford University in October 1940, a year after the outbreak of Second World War. Six weeks after his father's death from cancer in March 1948, Larkin proposed to Ruth, and that summer the couple spent their annual holiday touring Hardy country. His first book of poetry, *The North Ship*, was published in 1945 and, though not particularly strong, is notable for certain passages which foreshadow the unique sensibility and maturity that characterizes his later works. With his second volume of poetry, *The Less Deceived* (1955), Larkin became the preeminent poet of his generation, and a leading voice of what came to be called 'The Movement', a group of young English writers who rejected the prevailing fashion for neo-Romantic writing in the style of Yeats and Dylan Thomas. Like Hardy, Larkin focused on intense personal emotion but strictly avoided sentimentality or self-pity. In 1964, he confirmed his reputation as a major poet with the publication of *The Whitsun Weddings*, and

again in 1974 with *High Windows*: collections whose searing, often mocking, wit does not conceal the poet's dark vision and underlying obsession with universal themes of mortality, love, and human solitude. Deeply anti-social and a great lover of American jazz, Larkin never married in his life, though he was involved in erotic relationships with many women and conducted an uneventful life as a librarian in the provincial city of Hull, where he died in 1985. Yet, as a poet his reputation soared by the beginning of 20th century and in 2008, The Times declared him as the greatest English writer after the World War II.

10.2.12 Ted Hughes (1930-99)

Edward James "Ted Hughes" was an English poet, translator, and children's writer. Critics frequently rank him as one of the best poets of his generation and one of the twentieth century's greatest writers. He was appointed Poet Laureate in 1984 and held the office until his death. In 2008, The Times ranked Hughes fourth on its list of "The 50 greatest British writers since 1945". Hughes was married to the American poet Sylvia Plath, from 1956 until her suicide in 1963 at the age of thirty. His part in the relationship became controversial to some feminists and (particularly) American admirers of Plath. His last poetic work, *Birthday Letters* (1998), explored their complex relationship. These poems make reference to Plath's suicide, but none of them addresses directly the circumstances of her death. A poem discovered in October 2010, *Last Letter*, describes what happened during the three days leading up to Plath's suicide. Hughes did not share Larkin's interest in human beings, nor his horrified urbanity. *The Hawk in the Rain* (1957), contains memorable poems about birds and fish such as 'Hawk Roosting' and 'Pike' based on boyhood experience of fishing and shooting in his native Yorkshire. He fills these poems with the animals' physical presence, endowing their natural strength with mythic power. The anthropology he read at Cambridge enabled him to systematize his approach in *Crow* 1970, an invented primitive creation cycle which glorifies a brutal life-force. He wrote a repulsive version of Seneca's Oedipus for Brook's Theatre of Cruelty.

His later work is quieter and more topographical. Hughes accepted the Laureateship in succession to Betjeman, perhaps attracted to the mythic aspect of the role. Before he died in 1999, he released *Birthday Letters* (1999) poems which concern that time. *Lupercal* (1960), *Wodwo* (1967) and *Crow* (1970) are his other works. As the executor of Sylvia's estate, Hughes also edited and published several volumes of her work in the period 1965–98, but he was accused of censoring her writings after he revealed that he had destroyed several journals that she had written before her suicide. A selection of his poems concerning animal life was published as *A Ted Hughes Bestiary* (2014). Hughes was appointed a member of the Order of Merit by Queen Elizabeth II just before he died. He had continued to live at the house in Devon, until suffering a fatal heart attack on 28 October 1998 while undergoing hospital treatment for colon cancer in Southwark, London. His funeral was held on 3 November 1998, at North Tawton church, and he was cremated in Exeter. Speaking at the funeral, fellow poet Seamus Heaney, said: "No death outside my immediate family has left me feeling more bereft. No death in my lifetime has hurt poets more. He was a tower of tenderness and strength, a great arch under which the least of poetry's children could enter and feel secure. His creative powers were, as Shakespeare said, still crescent. By his death, the veil of poetry is rent and the walls of learning broken."

10.2.13 Stephen Spender (1909 - 1995)

Stephen Harold Spender was an English poet, translator, literary critic and also an editor. Born in London and educated at the Oxford, he was associated with W. H. Auden, Christopher Isherwood, C. Day Lewis and Louis MacNeice, which made him come out with many significant literary pieces for which he is still known today. He wrote *The Thirties and After* in 1979. The social and the political realities of the society interested him and therefore in his works we see a direct representation of the societal concerns. He was a very reflective and intellectual poet and therefore throughout his poetic career he showed his interest towards left wing politics. In his early poems, he

was very 'personal' but as he grew up his interest towards politics became stronger and he started writing political poetry. In his finest poems, Stephen Spender showed much of political concern as well as a deep empathy for basic human condition. His major works include *Poems* (1933, 1938), *Vienna* (1934), *The Still Centre* (1939), *Ruins and Vision* (1942), *Poems of Dedication* (1946), *The Edge of Being* (1949), and *World Within a World* (1951).

In his poetry, Stephen Spender showed a commitment towards leftist ideology and also presented deep personal feelings. He is therefore considered as a poet who showed unusual concern as he modernized the sensibilities of the man from both the personal as well as the political ways.

10.2.14 Cecil Day Lewis (1904 - 1972)

Cecil Day-Lewis was an Irish poet who was the British Poet Laureate of England from 1968 until he died in 1972. He was not only a poet but also a novelist of great measure. During his lifetime, he wrote numerous poems, essays and detective stories and considered himself a voice of revolution in the field of poetry and politics. For writing novels, he used the pen name, Nicholas Blake. Lewis was born on 27 April 1904 in Ballintubber, Queens County (now County Laois), Ireland to Reverend Frank Cecil Day-Lewis and Kathleen Squires. He received education at Sherborne School and then in 1923, got admission to Wadham College, Oxford. During his Oxford days, he devoted himself to poetry. In 1925, his first collection titled *Beechen Vigil* was published. Lewis graduated in 1927. In 1946, Lewis became the lecturer at Cambridge University and published his lectures in *The Poetic Image* in 1947. Later, he was a professor of Poetry at Oxford where he taught from 1951 to 1956. Later, Lewis became the Norton Professor at Harvard University from 1962 to 1963.

10.2.15 Seamus Heaney (1939-2013)

He was an Irish poet, playwright, and translator. He received the 1995 Nobel Prize in Literature. His father was Patrick Heaney, a farmer and cattle dealer. Heaney's mother was Margaret Kathleen McCann, whose relatives worked at a local linen mill. Heaney attended Anahorish Primary School, and won a scholarship to St Columb's College, a Roman Catholic boarding school in Derry when he was twelve years old. While studying at St. Columb's, Heaney's younger brother Christopher was killed in February 1953 at the age of four in a road accident. The poems "Mid-Term Break" and "The Blackbird of Glanmore" are related to his brother's death. At St. Columb's College, Heaney was taught Latin and Irish, and these languages, together with the Anglo-Saxon which he would study while a student of Queen's University, Belfast, were determining factors in many of the developments and retrenchments which have marked his progress as a poet. The first verses he wrote when he was a young teacher in Belfast in the early 1960s and many of the best known poems in *North*, his important volume published in 1975, are linguistically tuned to the Anglo-Saxon note in English. His poetic line was much more resolutely stressed and packed during this period than it would be in the eighties and nineties when the "Mediterranean" elements in the literary and linguistic heritage of English became more pronounced. *Station Island* (1984) reveals Dante, for example, as a crucial influence, and echoes of Virgil -as well as a translation from Book VI of *The Aeneid* -are to be found in *Seeing Things* (1991). Heaney's early study of Irish bore fruit in the translation of the Middle Irish story of Suibhne Gealt in *Sweeney Astray* (1982) and in several other translations and echoes and allusions, the Gaelic heritage has always been part of his larger keyboard of reference and remains culturally and politically central to the poet and his work. Heaney's poems first came to public attention in the mid-1960s when he was active as one of the group of poets, who were subsequently recognised as constituting something of a "Northern School" within Irish writing. Although Heaney is stylistically and temperamentally different from such writers as Michael Longley and Derek Mahon (his contemporaries), and Paul Muldoon, Medbh McGuckian and Ciaran Carson (members of younger Northern Irish generation), he does share with all of them the fate of having been born into a society deeply divided along religious and political lines, one which was doomed moreover to suffer a quarter

century of violence, polarization and inner distrust. This had the effect not only of darkening the mood of Heaney's work in the 1970s, but also of giving him a deep preoccupation with the question of poetry's responsibilities and prerogatives in the world, since poetry is poised between a need for creative freedom within itself and a pressure to express the same of social obligation felt by the poet as citizen.

Heaney's beginning as a poet coincided with his meeting the woman, whom he was to marry and who was to be the mother of his three children. Marie Devlin, like her husband, came from a large family, several of whom are themselves writers and artists, including the poet's wife who has recently published an important collection of retellings of the classic Irish myths and legends (*Over Nine Waves*, 1994). In the course of his career, Seamus Heaney has always contributed to the promotion of artistic and educational causes, both in Ireland and abroad. While a young lecturer at Queen's University, he was active in the publication of pamphlets of poetry by the rising generation and took over the running of an influential poetry workshop which had been established there by the English poet, Philip Hobsbaum, when Hobsbaum left Belfast in 1966.

Seamus Heaney died in Dublin on 30th August 2013, aged 74, following a short illness. After a fall outside a restaurant in Dublin, he entered a hospital for a medical procedure, but died the following morning before it took place. His funeral was held in Donnybrook, Dublin, on the morning of 2nd September 2013, and he was buried in the evening at St. Mary's Church, Bellaghy his home village, in the same graveyard as his parents, younger brother, and other family members. His son Michael revealed at the funeral mass that his father texted his final words, "Noli timere" (Latin: "Be not afraid"), to his wife, Marie, minutes before he died.

Seamus Heaney's first book, *Eleven Poems*, was published in November 1965 for The Queen's University Festival. In 1966, Faber published his first volume called *Death of a Naturalist.* This collection met with much critical acclaim and went on to win a host of awards. In 1969 *Door into the Dark* was published. In 1972 *Wintering Out* was published, and over the next few years Heaney began to give readings throughout Ireland, Britain and the United States. In 1975 Heaney published his fourth volume of *North*. His next volume, *Field Work,* was published in 1979. *Selected poems and Preoccupations*: *Selected Prose* was published in 1980 and in 1984 he published *Station Island.* Another volume, *The Haw Lantern* was published in 1987. In 1991, *Seeing Things*, was published. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1995 for what the Nobel committee described as "works of lyrical beauty and ethical depth, which exalt everyday miracles and the living past". In 1996, his collection, *The Spirit Level* was published and won the Whitbread Book of the Year Award. He repeated that success with the release of *Beowulf: A New Translation.*

His influence on contemporary poetry is reckoned to be immense. Robert Lowell has called Heaney "the most important Irish poet since Yeats". A good many others have echoed the sentiment. His influence is not restricted to Ireland but is felt worldwide.

10.3 LET'S SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed the modern poets and their works. Modernist poetry can be talked about as an experiment in poetry. The poets reacted against the romantic tendencies of the earlier age and tried to write poetry in an objective fashion. For example, T. S. Eliot in many of his critical writings emphasized the role of 'impersonality of the poet' and how the Wordsworthian tradition of 'outpouring of emotions' recollected in tranquility needs to be overthrown in order to write poems where objectivity is the main criteria. The effects of the World Wars were such that mankind lost faith in fellow human beings and therefore a sense of loneliness crept into the minds and consciousness of the modern man. Many Modernist poets looked to seventeenth century metaphysical poets for technical inspiration. So the Modernists were not entirely anti-tradition, and many, like T. S.

Eliot argued that Modern poets must have an extensive knowledge of tradition. Many poets of the late 1930s and 1940s (especially post-Second World War) embraced a more direct, impassioned, and human tone, perhaps responding to the inhumanity of the war. But with the 1950s came a movement back towards the linguistic precision of the early Modernists.

10.4 QUESTIONS

- How the modern English poetry is equipped with Victorian characteristics?
- Discuss Eliot as a modern poet?
- What is the contribution of Yeats to the modern poetry?
- What are the chief characteristics of Auden as a poet?
- How does the modern poetry radically change itself from that of Victorian poetry?
- 'Modern poetry is the portrayal of suffering and misguided humanity' Discuss.

10.5 FURTHER READINGS

- Cleanth Brooks, Modern Poetry and the Tradition.
- David Daiches, Poetry and the Modern World.
- F. R. Leavis, New Bearings in English Poetry.
- Louis MacNiece, Modern Poetry.
- Oxford Companion to Twentieth Century Poetry.
- WWW. Algappauniversity.ac.in
- WWW.jammuuniversity.ac.in
- History of English Literature by Edward Albert.

Unit –11 Modern Playwrights and Novelists

11.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- Know about modern playwrights and novelists.
- Understand the basic difference between Victorian Novels and plays and modern novels and plays.
- Know the key features of modern novels and plays.

- Analyse why the novelists and playwrights of modern era deviate from the accepted themes of the Victorian era.
- Understand the impact of modern tendencies on literature.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

The modern age was best known as the age of the novel. The great novelists like John Galsworthy, Joseph Conrad, D.H. Laurence, Henry James, H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett, Aldous Huxley, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf have marked their identities through their remarkable fictions. Modernist literature was a predominantly English genre of fiction writing, popular from roughly the 1910s into the 1960s. Modernist fiction spoke of the inner self and consciousness. Instead of progress, the Modernist writer saw a decline of civilization. Instead of new technology, the Modernist writer saw cold machinery and increased capitalism, which alienated the individual and led to loneliness. In many ways modernist fiction had surpassed poetry and drama and attracted a host of readers from all realms of life. Whereas the Victorian novel focused on social realism and tried to portray the Victorian society from close quarters often to make a critique of the Victorian ethos, the modernist novels instead of presenting the outside world focused more on the inner realms of man's existence as the mind and consciousness of man becomes the subject matter of study in the modernist novels.

11.2 MODERN NOVELISTS

11.2.1Henry James (1843-1916)

Henry James came of a wealthy and cultured American family. He was born in New York, and was educated in America and Europe before going to Harvard to read law (1862). He was a friend of the New England group of writers among them James Russell Lowell, H. W. Longfellow, and William Dean Howells. It was as a contributor to Howells' Atlantic Monthly and other American magazines that James began his career as a writer. American-born and never married, James would live the majority of his life in Europe, becoming a British citizen in 1915 after the outbreak of World War I. He was always a voracious reader and he now immersed himself in French, Russian, English, and American classic literature.

James was a prolific writer. Novels, short stories, travel sketches, literary criticism, autobiography flowed from his pen with a regularity that is surprising in one who was, above all things, a consummate artist. The Atlantic Monthly serialized his first novel *Watch and Ward* (1871). His chief novels fall broadly into three groups. Beginning with *Roderick Hudson* (1875) we have four novels, all of them simpler and more straightforward in technique than his mature work, and these deal with the contrast between the young American civilization and the older European culture. The other three of this group are *The American* (1876-77), *The Europeans* (1878), and *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881). Then there appeared his three novels mainly devoted to the study of the English character, *The Tragic Muse* (1890), *The Spoils of Poynton* (1897), and *The Awkward Age* (1899), of which *The Spoils of Poynton*, a relatively short novel, shows most clearly the development of his methods. He reached at the peak of his career in the three novels, *The Wings of the Dove* (1902), *The Ambassadors* (1903), and *The Golden Bowl* (1904), in which, turning again to the theme of the contrast between European and American cultures, he achieves a subtlety of character-study, a delicacy of perception, and an elaboration of artistic presentation which rank them high among modern novels. His novels lift up the heart to an outstanding degree.

11.2.2 Joseph Conrad (1857-1924)

Joseph Conrad, whose full name was Jozef Teodor Konrad Nalecz Korzeniowski, was the son of an exiled Polish patriot and was born at Berdiczew, in the Ukraine, where he spent the first thirteen

years of his life. He was educated at Cracow, and was intended for the university, but, as he was determined to go to sea, he went to Marseilles in 1874 and there joined the French Mercantile Marine. Four years later he landed at Lowestoft and joined the British merchant service. By 1885 he had his master mariner's certificate, and, before ill-health caused him to leave the sea in 1894, he had spent twenty years roaming the world in sail and steam ships.

Conrad, the greatest modern romantic, sought his subjects wherever he could expect to find adventure in an unusual or exotic setting. His own experience of the sea and, in particular, of Malayan waters, was of immense value to him as a writer, and most of his best work is in one or both of these settings. He was brought up during the heydays of European colonial explorations across the globe which made the European ships sail across oceans to find wealth and raw materials for the growing industrial demands of Europe. These explorations to amass wealth were masked under the name of civilizing missions and being given the name of 'doing good' to the supposed 'uncivilized,' 'uncultured' and often barbarous non-Europeans. Conrad's explorations across different parts of the world and experiences of the colonial enterprises from close quarters probed him to examine colonialism from a psychological point of view.

Conrad's first two works were based on his experiences of Malaya. *Almayer's Folly* and *An Outcast of the Islands* (1896), may not be among his best, but gives a foretaste of his later works. Then came one of his best novels, *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* (1897), a moving story of life on board ship, remarkable for its powerful atmosphere, its sea description, and its character study. Then appeared *Lord Jim: a Tale* (1900), the greatest of his early works. It is one of the best of Conrad's studies of men whose strength fails them in a moment of crisis, and is again a story of the sea. In it Conrad introduces for the first time his technique of oblique narrative, the story being told through the ironical Marlow, who reappears so frequently in later novels. *Youth-A Narrative; and two other Stories* (1902) and *Typhoon, and other Stories* (1903) contain seven tales which include some of Conrad's most powerful work. *Heart of Darkness* (1902) is a novella describing a British man's journey deep into the Congo area of Africa, where he encounters the cruel and mysterious Kurtz, a European trader who has established himself as a ruler of the native people there. *Lord Jim* and *Heart of Darkness* contain the signature elements of Conrad's writing: faraway settings; dramatic conflicts between human characters and the brutal forces of nature; and themes of individualism, the violent side of human nature and racial prejudice. Conrad was interested in showing "psycho-political" situations that drew parallels between the inner lives of single characters and the broader sweep of human history.

"The End of the Tether" in the same volume has very vivid descriptions of Far-Eastern sea-scapes. *Typhoon* is unsurpassed as a book about the sea even by this supreme master of sea description. *Nostromo-A Tale of the Seaboard* (1904) shifts the scene to the coastline of Central America. Its story of revolution is grippingly told, and the book is full of vivid descriptions and has many well-drawn portraits. Some critics believe it to be his finest work, and certainly nothing after *Nostromo seems as good*. *The Mirror of the Sea-Memoirs and Impressions* (1906) is a series of essays based on his experiences in the oceans of the world, and, as always in Conrad, it contains excellent pictures. It was followed by the popular detective story *The Secret Agent-A Simple Tale* (1907), which, though it contains some one or two well-drawn figures and suggests quite powerfully the atmosphere of the Under-world, is not one of his best. His *Under Western Eyes* came in (1911). Then came *Chance-A Tale in Two Parts* (1914), Conrad's most ambitious venture in the oblique method of story-telling. *After Victory-An Island Tale* (1915) and a further collection of four short stories, *Within the Tides-Tales* (1915), which add little to his stature, Conrad wrote *The Shadow Line-A Confession* (1917), a short novel in which the suggestion of the supernatural is masterly. Of his other novels *The Rescue-A Romance of the Shallows* (1920) is long drawn out, but has moments of high excitement, and is an excellent study of primitive men; *The Arrow of Gold-A Story between Two Notes* (1919) and *The Rover* (1923) are both set in a background of European history-not very successfully; *while Suspense-*

A Napoleonic Novel (1925), also a historical novel, was unfinished at his death. *The Inheritors-An Extravagant Story* (1901) and *Romance-A Novel* (1903), in which he collaborated with Ford Maddox Hueffer (later Ford Maddox Ford). Posthumously collected were *Tales of Hearsay* (1925), four stories, and *Last Essays* (1926).

As a conscious stylist he belongs to the class of James, but he avoids over-refinement, and is on that account more concise and more readable. In his characterisation too, he steers a middle course, revealing only so much of the 'interior' of the characters' mind as is essential for our understanding. He was concerned with physical reality, and though aware, like James or Dostoevsky, of the 'inner reality' he does not seem to have regarded this as more real than the external world. If Conrad is sometimes uncritically called a psychological novelist, it is because he is at his best in depicting man in conflict-either with his own weaknesses or with the elements of Nature. In this respect, *Lord Jim* holds the first place among his novels. A young sailor in a moment of panic deserts his apparently sinking ship and cannot forgive himself for this cowardice. Ultimately, he redeems his shame by dying a heroic death. It seems that Jim somewhat resonates Conrad's own guilt of not being there for Poland.

Conrad had a deep compassion for human misery. A vein of pessimism runs through all his stories-a haunting sense of mystery and fate, which is characteristically Slavonic. Conrad's pessimism, however, is quite different from the doom-and-despair of contemporary novelists.

11.2.3 Herbert George Wells (1866-1946)

Herbert George Wells was born on 21st September 1866 in Bromley, Kent County, England, son of Sarah Neal, maid to the upper classes, and Joseph Wells, shopkeeper and professional cricket player. The Wells were quite poor and it was not the happiest of marriages. At an early age Herbert was an avid reader, but it would be some years before his talents as a writer were realised. He attended Thomas Morley's Academy for a few years before financial hardship forced him to leave and seek practical employment. Subsequently he became a teacher, and in 1884 entered the Normal School of Science, South Kensington, where he spent three years and gained much of the scientific knowledge which he was to turn to such good use. On leaving the College he again took up teaching, but in 1893 ill-health compelled him to leave the profession and turn to literature for a livelihood. He began as a journalist and contributed to such periodicals as The Fortnightly Review, Pall Mall Gazette, and Saturday Review. The year 1895 saw the publication of *The Time Machine*, first of the scientific romances which established him as a popular writer by 1900.

The most prolific of major modern writers, Wells poured out scientific romances, novels, pamphlets, popular educational works, with incredible speed and regularity. In his writing life of some fifty years, he produced just under a hundred works. The first ten years after *The Time Machine* (1895) were primarily concerned with the scientific romances on which much of his popularity still rests. Among them we may mention *The Stolen Bacillus and Other Stories* (1895), *The Wonderful Visit* (1895), *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896), *The Invisible Man* (1897), *The War of the Worlds* (1898), *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899)-revised as *The Sleep* Awakes (1911), *The First Men in the Moon* (1901), *The Food of the Gods* (1904). In these works, apart from the romantic incidents and ready inventions, he presented the interest of the people in science and how science has taken over the life of the modern man. If the poets and writers of the age were writing psychological novels and works dealing with the moral and psychological dilemmas of the war-torn society, then H. G. Wells represented another significant aspect of the modern life – that is, how the modern existence is enamoured by science and scientific inventions.

Not only scientific novels, H. G. Wells is also known for his sociological works such as *Kipps* (1905), *Tono-Bungay* (1909), *Ann Veronica* (1909), *The History of Mr. Polly* (1910),*The New Machiavelli* (1911), *Mr. Britling sees it through* (1916), and, after a lapse of ten years, *The World of*

William Clissold (1926),. His other significant works consist *of Marriage* (1912) and *The Passionate Friends* (1913) as well as *The Outline of History* (1920), *A Short History of the World* (1922) and *Experiments in Autobiography, The Autocracy of Mr. Parham* (1930), *Brynhild* (1937), *Apropos of Dolores* (1938) and *The Holy Terror* (1939).

These novels, like his romances, are full of interesting incidents and dramatic scenes, and the good- humoured naturalness of their style makes them easy and attractive reading. They present a vivid picture of the contemporary social scene among the lower middle classes, which Wells had studied at first hand with close and detailed observation. In them his interest in problems of social adjustment and distinctions between classes is always apparent, but, kept within bounds, it does not overburden the story. *Marriage* (1912) and *The Passionate Friends* (1913) begin a series of novels in which Wells's interest in social problems outweighs considerations of story and character. The novels which immediately follow these two, *The World Set Free* (1914), *The Wife of Sir Isaac Harman* (1914), *The Research Magnificent* (1915), *Joan and Peter, The Story of an Education* (1918), *The Undying Fire* (1919), *The Secret Places of the Heart* (1922), are all much inferior to the works of his great period.

Wells' masterpiece spawned more invasion literature and inspired numerous movie adaptations and print sequels. Part prophet, part pessimist, Wells was a prolific author not just of science fiction but also fiction and non-utopian and dystopian short stories, travel sketches, histories, and socio-political commentary. While his most popular works tend to show a bleak future for humanity, he was not without his sardonic wit and wry humour.

11.2.4 D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930)

D.H. Lawrence can be talked about as one of the foremost novelists of the twentieth century, who represented in his novels the modern psyche from a perspective which was often refreshing and challenging as he did a frank treatment of sex and love in his novels. In his lifetime, he is often thought to be someone who has been obscene and his novels were charged with obscenity during his time. It is to be remembered that what was then thought to be obscene was actually nothing but frank treatment of sexual and psychological norms. He had a prophet's lack of interest in aesthetics.

David Herbert Lawrence was born on September 11, 1885 in Eastwood, Nottinghamshire, Central England. He was the fourth child of a struggling coal miner, who was a heavy drinker. His mother was a former schoolteacher, greatly superior in education to her husband. Lawrence's childhood was dominated by poverty and friction between his parents. He was educated at Nottingham High School, to which he had won a scholarship. He worked as a clerk in a surgical appliance factory and then for four years as a pupil-teacher. After studies at Nottingham University, Lawrence matriculated at 22 and briefly pursued a teaching career. Lawrence's mother died in 1910; he helped her die by giving her an overdose of sleeping medicine. The appearance of his first novel, *The White Peacock* (1911), launched Lawrence into a writing career. In 1912 he met Frieda von Richthofen, Professor Ernest Weekly's wife and fell in love with her. Frieda left her husband and three children, and they eloped to Bavaria. Lawrence's novel *Sons and Lovers* appeared in 1913 and was based on his childhood. In 1914 Lawrence married Frieda, and traveled with her in several countries. Lawrence's fourth novel, *The Rainbow* (1915), was about two sisters growing up in the north of England. Lawrence started to write *The Lost Girl* (1920) in Italy. He dropped the novel for some years and rewrote the story in an old Sicilian farmhouse near Taormina in 1920. Lawrence's best-known work is *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, first published privately in Florence in 1928. It tells of the love affair between a wealthy, married woman, and a man who works on her husband's estate. The book was banned for a time in both UK and the US as pornographic. Lawrence's other novels from the 1920s include *Women in Love* (1920), a sequel to *The Rainbow*. *Aaron's Rod* (1922) shows the influence of Nietzsche, and in *Kangaroo* (1923) Lawrence expressed his own idea of a 'superman'. *The Plumed*

Serpent (1926) was a vivid evocation of Mexico and its ancient Aztec religion. *The Man Who Died* (1929), is a bold story of Christ's Resurrection. D.H. Lawrence died in Venice, France on March 2, 1930. He also gained posthumous renown for his expressionistic paintings completed in the 1920s.

Lawrence combined a violent hatred of the values of modern mechanised civilization with a love of the primitive and natural, and a passionate belief in the importance of the development of each unique individuality. His portrayals of the vital experiences of human life, of which the most important was the sexual relationship, indicate that Lawrence was deeply conscious of their religious nature. Therefore, it is seen that although sex is frequently his theme, it is handled as a sacred thing, spiritual not animal, and this, as he himself claims, remains true even of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Lawrence is, then, the prophet of the primitive instincts and passions; his own appeal is to the heart rather than the head. D. H. Lawrence for the first time broke open the doors of fiction, urging readers and writers to explore hitherto unseen territories. So he gave women space to express their sexuality and desire. He rejected the outward form of writing and thinking, secularised Christianity and centred his novels on the theme of realization of the self and the liberation of sexuality from the dominating forms of social repression. He believed that sex should not be considered dirty because sex has significance beyond physical act. Lawrence was a direct inheritor of the romantic prejudice against machines. In his works, thus we find a critique of industrial England that is contrasted with vivid evocations of a working countryside. We find in his works a distrust of modern civilisation and a preference for a primitive mode of life.

11.2.5 James Joyce (1882-1941)

James Joyce (1882-1941) is the central figure in modernist prose, as Eliot is in modernist verse. He makes a contrast with Lawrence; both were rebels, exiles, and victims of censorship, but they had little else in common. Joyce is an artist, deeply interested in the medium and form of his art. Each of his chief works differs in language and approach from its predecessor. Joyce's aim was to leave to impersonal and objective work of art for the reader to interpret, an aim he shared with Eliot, James and Flaubert, but not with Lawrence. 'The artist,' Stephen Daedalus pronounced in Portrait of the Artist, 'like the God of creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails.'

James Augustine Aloysius Joyce was born in Dublin, on February 2, 1882. He was an Irish novelist, poet and literary critic. He was the son of John Stanislaus Joyce, an underprivileged gentleman, who had failed in a distillery business and had tried different kinds of professions, including politics and tax collecting. Joyce's mother, Mary Jane Murray, was an accomplished pianist, whose life was dominated by the Roman Catholic Church. In spite of their poverty, the family struggled to keep up a middle class facade. He attended the Jesuit Clongowes Wood College in County Kildare, then, briefly, the Christian Brothers–run O'Connell School. Despite the chaotic family life imposed by his father's unpredictable finances, he excelled at the Jesuit Belvedere College and graduated from University College Dublin in 1902. In 1904, he met his future wife, Nora Barnacle, and they moved to mainland Europe. He briefly worked in Pula and then moved to Trieste in Austria-Hungary, working as an English instructor. Except for an eight-month stay in Rome working as a correspondence clerk and three visits to Dublin, Joyce resided there until 1915. In Trieste, he published his book of poems *Chamber Music* and his short story collection *Dubliners*, and he began serially publishing *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in the English magazine *The Egoist*. During most of World War I, Joyce lived in Zurich, Switzerland, and worked on *Ulysses*. After the war, he briefly returned to Trieste and then moved to Paris in 1920, which became his primary residence until 1940.

On 11 January 1941, Joyce underwent surgery in Zurich for a perforated duodenal ulcer. He fell into a coma the following day. He died at the age of 58.His body was buried in the Fluntern Cemetery in Zurich. Joyce had been a subject of the United Kingdom all of his life, and although two

senior Irish diplomats were in Switzerland at the time, only the British consul attended the funeral.

There are already signs of James's genius in his first work, *Dubliners* (begun 1900, published 1914). The narrative technique is straightforward, but these objective, short-story studies of the sordid Dublin slums are powerfully written, and their prose style, though simple, has a distinct individual flavour. Set in the same city is *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), an intense, account of a developing writer torn between the standards of an ascetic, religious upbringing and his desire for sensuousness. An earlier version, much more conventional in style, was *Stephen Hero*, which was not published until 1944. Stephen Dedalus appears again in *Ulysses* (1922), a study of the life and mind of Leopold and Mrs. Bloom during a single day. It is modelled on the *Odyssey* of Homer, but it is set in the squalor of Dublin's slums. The stream of consciousness technique and the internal monologue are used with great power, and Bloom has been described as "the most complete character in fiction." The material is handled objectively and with a frankness that caused the book to be banned as obscene.

Joyce's only other novel was *Finnegans Wake* (1939), parts of which had appeared as early as 1927 and 1928 as *Work in Progress* and *Anna Livia Plurabelle*. In it he has developed his technique to a point where subtlety and complexity produce incomprehensibility. It is a study of the history of the human race from its earliest beginnings, as seen in the incoherent dreams of a certain Mr. Earwicker. The use of an inconsecutive narrative and of a private vocabulary adds to the confusion, but it cannot conceal the poetic furor, the power, and brilliant verbal skill of the work.

Joyce was a ceaseless experimenter, ever anxious to explore the potentialities of a method once it was evolved, and in his use of the 'stream of consciousness' technique, and in his handling of the interior monologue, he went further and deeper than any other novelist. His sensitiveness, his depth of penetration into the human consciousness, gives to his character-study a subtlety unparalleled in his day, and if, in his attempts to catch delicate and elusive shades of feeling and fix them in words, he has frequently become incomprehensible, the fact remains that a character like Leopold Bloom is a unique and fascinating creation. The open ended nature of his novels have invited constant reinterpretation. Moreover, Joyce's experimentation has made him an inspiration, even beyond English Literature.

11.2.6 Virginia Woolf (1882-1941)

Virginia Woolf is of one of the greatest novelists that early twentieth century had given us. She is not just a novelist but also a great feminist writer who fought for the cause of women through her writings. She was the daughter of Sir Leslie Stephen, critic, rationalist, scholar and founder of the *Dictionary of National Biography*. Its pages contain other Stephens, as well as Huxleys, Darwins, Stracheys, and Trevelyans: families of gentry, evangelical or professional background, who had abolished the slave trade, pioneered science, reformed the Civil Service, and climbed mountains. Born as Adeline Virginia Stephen on January 25, 1882, in London, England, she grew up to be an essayist, novelist, publisher, critic, especially famous for her novels and feminist writings. A fine stylist, she experimented with several forms of biographical writing, composed painterly short fictions, and sent to her friends and family a lifetime of brilliant letters.

After her father died in 1904, Virginia lived with her sister and brothers in Bloomsbury Group, a group of Intellectuals, critics and artists: Lytton Strachey, the biographer; John Maynard Keynes, the economist; Roger Fry and Clive Bell, art critics: E. M. Forster and others. All the men had been at Cambridge. Virginia's sister Vaznessa, a painter, married Bell and settled nearby. Virginia Stephen- or Woolf, for in 1912 she married Leonard Woolf, civil servant and author- had become central to the Group. Bloomsbury memoirs, letters and diaries show both wit and intelligence, and an uncommon frankness about sexual behaviour, homosexual, bisexual, adulterous; or incestuous. As she came into her own, and comfortable in her new environment, Virginia began to write. She first produced short

articles and reviews for various London weeklies. She then embarked on her first novel, *The Voyage Out* (1915), which would consume nearly five years of her life and go through seven drafts. When that book came out to good reviews, she continued producing novels, each one a more daring experiment in language and structure, than the last one. Although she had affairs of the heart with other women like Vita Sackville-West and Violet Dickinson, Virginia remained very much in love with Leonard for her entire life. He was her greatest supporter, half-nursemaid, and half-cheerleader. He was also a good novelist in his own right, and a publishing entrepreneur, having founded Hogarth Press with Virginia. Together, they scouted great unknown talents like T.S. Eliot, Katherine Mansfield and E.M. Forster. Hogarth also began publishing Virginia's novels.

Her first novel *The Voyage Out* (1915), is told in the conventional narrative manner, but with a concentration of interest upon character and a delicacy of touch typical of all her work. The same emphasis on character-analysis and the same lack of incident characterise *Night and Day* (1919), another study of personal adjustment and development. Then came her first really mature work, *Jacob's Room* (1922), in which her distinctive technique is fully used for the first time. By a series of disconnected impressions, revealed mainly through the consciousness of people with whom he came into contact, we are made aware of the personality of Jacob. This same method, which came to be called stream of consciousness, handled with greater firmness, is again used in *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925). Though what little 'event' there is occupies only one day, Virginia Woolf is enabled to create not only the lives of her chief characters, which are studied with a penetrating subtlety, but even the London background. *To the Lighthouse* (1927) shows a still firmer mastery of the 'stream of consciousness' technique, and is by many accounted her finest work. The ultimate development of her method appears in *The Waves* (1931), from which plot, in the normally accepted sense, is almost entirely lacking. It is a symbolic work of great poetic beauty, in which the consciousness of the six characters is studied in a series of internal monologues. *Flush* (1933), *The Years* (1937), in which she again deals with family relationships, and the unfinished *Between the Acts* (1941) show her usual delicacy of touch and brilliant technical mastery, but the first two fall below the level of her major works, while of the last it is difficult to attempt an assessment. Standing alone among her novels, and therefore last to be considered here, is the fantasy, *Orlando, a Biography* (1928), which may be said to have established her reputation with the wider reading public.

Despite her success, Virginia battled her own internal demons, and although she could quiet them through rest, sometimes she found it impossible to escape the voices in her head. She likely suffered from manic-depression, though doctors knew little about that disorder at the time. Leonard tried to monitor his wife's activities, going so far as to limit the number of visitors she had and to prescribe different kinds of food for her to eat. His efforts likely enabled Virginia to achieve as much as she did. However, he couldn't ultimately save her from herself. On March twenty-eight, 1941, Virginia wrote her husband two notes, both of which told him that if anyone could have saved her, it would have been him. However, she didn't feel she'd be able to come back from this latest episode of what was then called "madness" so she thought it best to end it all. She then picked up her walking stick and headed to the River Ouse. Once on the banks, she filled her pockets with stones, waded into the water, and drowned herself. She was fifty-nine years old.

Virginia Woolf, talking of modern fiction says, "each day the mind receives a myriad impressions - trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel... if the novelists could base his work upon his own feeling and not upon convention there would be no plot, no comedy, no tragedy in the accepted style; the future novelist will be able to convey an impression of the 'luminous halo' of life - this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit". Virginia Woolf was one of the most revolutionary and controversial English writers of the 20th century as her writings, whether creative or critical (essays) demonstrate. She was concerned about liberty and freedom for writers and their art as well as for women, their lives and their writings.

11.2.7 E.M. Forster (1879-1970)

Edward Morgan Forster was born in London on 1st January 1879. He graduated from King's College. In his first novel *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905) he made an attempt to present the idea that man should be in touch with the land to cultivate his imagination. *The Longest Journey* (1907) was the next one which was comic in its tone. *A Room with a View* (1908) concerns itself with the experience of a young British woman, Lucy Honeychurch, in Italy. However, Forster's first major success was *Howards End* (1910), a novel centred on the alliance between the liberal Schlegel sisters and Ruth Wilcox, the proprietor of the titular house, against her husband, Henry Wilcox, an enterprising businessman. The novel ends with the marriage of Henry Wilcox to Margaret Schlegel, who brings him back to Howards End, re-establishing the Wilcox land link. Forster's next major work is *A Passage to India which was published in 1924*. This novel examines the British colonial occupation of India, but rather than developing a political focus, explores the friendship between an Indian doctor and British schoolmaster during a trial against the doctor, based on a false charge. *A Passage to India* is the last novel Forster published during his lifetime, but two other works remained, the incomplete *Arctic Summer*, and the unpublished complete novel *Maurice*, which was written in 1914, but published in 1971 after Forster's death.

11.2.8 Aldous Leonard Huxley (1894-1963)

Aldous was an English writer and philosopher, born into the prominent Huxley family, he graduated from Balliol College, Oxford, with a degree in English literature. Early in his career, he published short stories and poetry and edited the literary magazine *Oxford Poetry*, before going on to publish travel writing, satire, and screenplays. He spent the latter part of his life in the United States, living in Los Angeles from 1937 until his death. In 1960, Huxley was diagnosed with oral cancer and for the next three years his health steadily declined and he died the same year.

His novels are: *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936) which presents the meaninglessness of upper class life and manners, a deeper concern with the attempt to show the barrenness of contemporary values, and to present a positive ideal which will serve a disenchanted and hopeless world. The lighthearted satire on contemporary society found in *Crome Yellow* (1921) gives way to the equally lively, but more sensational and more daring, study of post-War disillusionment and immorality in *Antic Hay* (1923). In *Those Barren Leaves* (1925) a more earnest note enters in the discussions of moral problems. It was followed by his most successful piece of fiction, *Point Counter Point* (1928), which is technically of interest as Huxley's attempt "to musicalise fiction,' and is even more striking as a mordant, unflinching picture of a disillusioned, frustrated society, in which the healthy life of the senses has been paralysed by the bonds of an inhibiting ethical code. *Brave New World* (1932) gives a satirical picture of what he imagines the world would be under the rule of science – no disease, no pain, but no emotion, and, worse, no spiritual life. Technically this novel leaves much to be desired, but it provokes much frightening thought. In *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936) Huxley's faith in the life of the spirit, which first became evident in *Those Barren Leaves*, again finds expression. After settling in America, he produced two satirical novels in the witty, daring manner of his early works, though both have obvious links with his more philosophical books. These two, *After Many a Summer* (1939) and *Time must have a Stop* (1944), were followed by *The Perennial Philosophy* (1946), which stated his views on the importance of spiritual integrity directly and seriously. Huxley's prime importance is as a reflector of the feelings of his age.

11.2.9 John Galsworthy (1867-1933)

Galsworthy was an English novelist and playwright. He is best known for his trilogy of novels collectively called *The Forsyte Saga,* and two later trilogies, *A Modern Comedy* and *End of the Chapter*. He was the second child and elder son of the four children of John Galsworthy and his wife

Blanche Bailey. John senior was a London solicitor, with a flourishing practice. Galsworthy was educated by a governess until he was nine. In 1876 he was sent to Saugeen, a small preparatory school in Bournemouth. He was happy there, and his happiness increased when his younger brother, Hubert, was sent to join him. In the summer term of 1881 Galsworthy left Saugeen to go to Harrow School. After Harrow, Galsworthy went to New College, Oxford to read law, matriculating in October 1886. As his father wished, Galsworthy entered the legal profession. He was admitted to Lincoln's Inn and was called to the bar in1890.

Early in his literary career Galsworthy wrote under a pseudonym, John Sinjon, in whose name his first four books were published. He married Ada Galsworthy in 1905. Galsworthy's health declined as he was working on *Over the River*. In late 1932 he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, only the second English author to receive the award since its inception in 1901. He was by then too ill to go to Stockholm for the presentation, and died at his London home on 31 January 1933, aged 65, from a combination of causes including cerebral thrombosis, arterial sclerosis and a possible brain tumour.

Galsworthy began his literary career as a novelist, and, after publishing some half-dozen works of little note, including the novelette *Jocelyn* (1898) and *The Island Pharisees* (1904), he wrote his first great successful novel, *The Man of Property* (1906), which was to become the first part of the immense family novel, *The Forsyte Saga* (published in an omnibus volume 1922). The other books which complete the work are *In Chancery* (1920), *To Let* (1921), and the interludes which link the three major sections, *Indian Summer of a Forsyte* (1917) and *Awakening* (1920). These last four are not as good as the first part, but nevertheless *The Forsyte Saga* as a whole is one of the striking achievements in modern fiction. It is a cool, controlled, ironical dissection of the Forsytes, a typical City family, and this series of stories handles a vast canvas of figures with firmness and skill. The fortunes of the family, as seen in its post-1918 generation, are described in *The White Monkey* (1924), *The Silver Spoon* (1926), and *Swan Song* (1928), which, with two more interludes, *A Silent Wooing* (1927) and *Passers By* (1927), were collected together as *A Modern Comedy* (1929). While the novels of these two series were being written, Galsworthy produced a number of works which add little to his stature. Nearly all show the same interest in sociological problems which underlies *The Forsyte Saga and A Modern Comedy*. They include *The Country House* (1907), *Fraternity* (1909), *The Patrician* (1911), *The Dark Flower* (1913), *The Freelands* (1915), *Beyond* (1917), *Saint's Progress* (1919), and then, later, come *Maid in Waiting* (1931) and *Flowering Wilderness* (1932).

As a novelist Galsworthy reflects the contemporary interest in sociological problems. His most important works give an objective, ironical portrait of the upper-middle class to which he himself belonged. They are earnest and sincere analyses of its weakness and inadequacies, and, like his plays, show him to be primarily a social critic. Class rather than character is his concern, and even his best characters are to a considerable extent types: motive and impulse are of secondary importance to him. He is a realist with a keen and accurate observation, and handles his material with a restraint, delicacy, and impartiality.

11.2.10 William Somerset Maugham (1874-1965)

Maugham was an English writer, known for his plays, novels and short stories. Somerset Maugham was of Irish ancestry though he was born in Paris and better known for his short stories which were much evocative in their content and style. Most of his short stories are set in the remote areas of the British Empire. Maugham received his education in King's School in Canterbury, Kent and then in Heidelberg University. He then studied in London and qualified as a Surgeon practicing in later life at St. Thomas Hospital. His experience in medical practice provided him much material for his artistic works. Maugham gave up writing novels shortly after the Second World War, and his last years were marred by senility. He died at the age of 91.

Maugham's novels reveal him as a cynical cosmopolitan presenting life in an ironically detached manner which does not flinch in the face of the mean or sordid. A realist, with an intense interest in human nature, keenly aware of the contradictions and frustrations of life, he was a poised, finished artist, who wrote in a prose that was clear, precise, and simple. His experiences in hospitals provided him with the knowledge of London's poorer quarters, in which were set such early works as *Liza of Lambeth* (1897) and *Mrs. Craddock* (1902). From his travels he drew the background of *The Moon and Sixpence* (1919) and *The Painted Veil* (1925).

His best novel was undoubtedly Of Human Bondage (1915), a study in frustration, which had a strong autobiographical element. Among his other fiction, mention must be made of Cakes and Ale (1930), which dealt with genius involved with vulgarity that was full of happy life, and with deadly pseudo-intellectual society; and The Razor's Edge (1944), concerning the moral and spiritual emptiness of affluent America. He was a prolific writer of short stories, many of them set in the Far East and the Pacific; with highly professional skill, Maugham depicted relationships between the sexes and the unhappiness, even cruelty, resulting from them. Evelyn Waugh wrote of him, that Maugham's disciplined writing with its "brilliant technical dexterity" was not without disadvantages: He is never boring or clumsy, he never gives a false impression; he is never shocking; but this very diplomatic polish makes impossible for him any of those sudden transcendent flashes of passion and beauty which less competent novelists occasionally attain.

11.3 PLAYWRIGHTS

11.3.1 Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906)

Ibsen was the son of a middle class merchant in the small town of Skien, Norway. His father's business failed when the boy was eight and his early years were of poverty and hardship. At school be was shy, sullen and solitary, and throughout his life he remained almost friendless because of his unsociable nature. At fifteen he was apprenticed to a chemist. After serving his apprenticeship for five years he lived two or three years in the capital, Oslo, trying to earn his living by writing. He acquired his theatrical experience in the capacity of manager first of the National Theatre in Bergen and then of the Norwegian Theatre in the capital. From the very beginning, Ibsen was a heretic and rebel and attacked traditional opinions and civilised conventions. In *Love's Comedy*, a slight play in rhymed verse, he exposed romantic love as well as the absurdities of Norwegian customs of public betrothal and permanent marriage. This made him so unpopular that he had to leave the country and live in Italy. The change of scene and climate, however, relaxed him and gave his mind a sense of peace.

In 1865, appeared *Brand* and in 1867 *Peer Gynt*, both poetic plays which made Ibsen famous throughout Europe. He was awarded a poet's pension. Next came his social satires in prose of which the more important are: *Pillars of Society* (1876), *A Doll's House* (1879), *Ghosts* (1881), *An Enemy of the People* (1882), *Wild Duck* (1884), *Hedda Gabler* (1890), and *The Master Builder* (1892).

A Doll's House and *Ghosts* were sensations throughout Europe, and Ibsen was abused everywhere. His later plays beginning with *Wild Duck* are marked by symbolism, mysticism and fantasy. They have been differently interpreted and no two persons agree upon their meaning. Ibsen's earlier plays dealing with history, legend and folklore are unimportant. It is difficult to convey adequately the force of Ibsen's impact on the drama of the time, not only in England but in other countries of Europe.

11.3.2 John Millington Synge (1871-1909)

Synge was the greatest dramatist in the rebirth of the Irish Theatre. His plays are few in number but they are of a stature to place him among the greatest playwrights in the language. Persuaded by Yeats to abandon his Bohemian life and live for a while in the Aran Islands and then return to Dublin

and devote himself to creative work. *The Aran Islands* (1907) is the journal of Synge's retreat among these primitive people. The plays of Irish peasant life on which his fame rests were written in the last six years of his life. The first two one-act plays, *In the Shadow of the Glen*, (1903), a comedy, and *Riders to the Sea* (1904), considered one of the finest tragedies ever written, were produced by the Irish National Theatre Society. This group, with Synge, Yeats and Lady Gregory as co-directors, organized in 1904 the famous Abbey Theatre. Two comedies, *The Well of the Saints* (1905) and *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907), were presented by the Abbey players. The latter play created a furore of resentment among Irish patriots stung by Synge's bitter humour. Synge's later works included *The Tinker's Wedding*, published in 1908 but not produced for fear of further riots, and *Deirdre of the Sorrows*, a tragedy unfinished at the time of his death but presented by the Abbey players in 1910. The decisive event in Synge's life was his going, at the suggestion of Yeats, to the Isle of Aran. His experiences there, and later in Ireland, gave him the theme and style of his drama. He saw and felt deeply the life of the peasants wringing a hard living from sea and soil; its tragedy, its comedy, its poetry and dignity are all captured in his work. Synge reacted strongly against the almost photographic reporting of the plays of the realistic movement, which, he felt, missed the essential poetry and joy of life. Like Yeats, he sought inspiration in the legends and myths of earlier days. His keen insight into human nature and his skill in the delineation of character are best seen in Nora (The Shadow of the Glen), and Christy Mahon in *The Playboy of the Western World*. The presence of nature is felt in every one of his plays. Sometimes as a fearsome relentless enemy (Riders to the Sea), sometimes as a kind comforter (The Well of the Saints), but always as a chief actor in the drama or as a source of imagery, nature is present. Synge views nature with something of the mysticism, and much of the same careful sensitive observation, found in Wordsworth, but he shows no tendency to build up a philosophy of nature. He is not didactic or moralistic; his approach being something akin to pagan.

11.3.3 John Galsworthy (1867-1933)

As a dramatist Galsworthy belongs to the realist tradition of Jones and Pinero. His ideas on the drama are to be found in his collection of essays *The Inn of Tranquillity* (1912). Of his best known plays *The Silver Box* (1906) deals with the inequality of justice; *Strife* (1909) with the struggle between Capital and Labour; *Justice* (1910) with the cruelty of solitary confinement; *The Skin Game* (1920) with the different values of the old aristocracy and the newly rich businessman; *Loyalties* (1922) with class loyalties and prejudices, and *Escape* (1926) with the inadequacy of the administration of justice and the attitude of different types of people toward an escaped prisoner. His other plays include: *Joy* (1907), *The Little Dream* (1911), *The Pigeon* (1912), *The Eldest Son* (1912), *The Fugitive* (1913), *The Mob* (1914), *A Bit O' Love* (1915), *The Foundations* (1916), *Six Short Plays* (1921), *A Family Man* (1921), *Windows* (1922), *The Forest* (1924), *Old English* (1924), *The Show* (1925), *The Silver Spoon* (1926), *Exiled* (1929), *The Roof* (1929)

11.3.4 Samuel Beckett (1906-89)

Samuel Beckett had the career of an Irish exile. A Protestant, he was educated at Wilde's old school- captaining the cricket XI - and lectured in philosophy at Trinity College, Dublin. Samuel Barclay Beckett was born in Ireland on April 13, 1906 to William Frank Beckett a civil engineer and May Barclay. While growing up, Samuel Beckett was the outdoor type who often goes out with his brother and cousin and when he is not, he retreats to his tower with a book. Early in his life, his family noticed a certain moodiness and taciturnity about him. He attended various schools in Dublin until he matriculated at Portora Royal School, the same boarding school that Oscar Wilde attended, in 1920. At Portora, Beckett excelled at sports, like cricket, but was mediocre in the classroom. His attitude towards academics is often described as indifferent; however, when provoked he became quite insolent. During these phases, he would often make fun of his teachers so severely, that his fellow classmates were astonished by his cruelty.

He attended Trinity College where he studied English, Italian, and French. He taught at Campbell College and Ecole Normale Superieure. He met James Joyce in 1926 and loved his works and James Joyce became a great influence on his own creative works. He travelled around Europe for a while before he settled in Paris. His first published work "Assumption" is a short story which was published in the magazine, Transition a serial edited by Franco-American writer, Eugene Jolas. He won his first literary prize the following year with the poem, "Whoroscope". He published *Proust* a critical study of Marcel Proust's work and his only long work on criticism. In 1933, William, Samuel Beckett's father died and due to the closeness they had, the loss devastated Beckett and he went to Tavistock Clinic in London for treatment by the influential psychoanalyst, Dr. Wilfred Brion who also studied him. This was where he attended a lecture by Carl Jung on the "Never Properly Born" which affected much of his subsequent works including *Watt, Waiting for Godot* and *All That Fall*. It took just four months for him to complete *Waiting for Godot* (1953), the piece which established Beckett as a significant literary figure of the Twentieth Century. Throughout the play, the two main characters, Vladimir and Estragon, find various methods of passing the time while waiting for Godot–a character who never actually appears. This has led to much speculation about the identity of Godot; many assume Godot to be an allusion to God. Beckett subsequently published many more plays, such as, *Endgame* (1957), *Krapp's Last Tape* (1958), and *Happy Days* (1960). While they were all successful, none received the same attention that Godot did. His other plays include: *Breath* (1969), *Not I* (1972), *Catastrophe* (1982), *What Where* (1983), *Human Wishes* (1984), Eleutheria (1996), *Act Without Words I* (1957), *Act Without Words II* (1957), *Play* (1964), *Come and Go* (1966) and *Catastrophe* (1982).

He married Suzanne Dechevaux-Dumesnil, a French woman in 1961.After the World War II he had a critical epiphany premised on his fear of remaining in James Joyce's shadows. That was when he discovered that his own strength lies in writing about impoverishment, lack of knowledge, taking away rather than adding. He had the belief that to not have the desire to acquire more knowledge is the key to having peace. He argued that desire is the source of human misery and that peace will only be possible when desire is removed all together. He was a playwright, novelist and poet who became known for his works that dealt with the traumatic effects of the world wars. He wrote most of his works in French because he found it easier to write without style, that is, without the conventional boundaries of writing in English language. After writing in French, he would later translate them to English. He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1969 for his writing, which – in new forms for the novel and drama – in the destitution of modern man acquires its elevation. From his childhood, Beckett was a private person, who enjoyed his solitude. So much was his love for solitude that when his wife heard the news of his Nobel Prize award, she described it as a catastrophe for her extremely private husband. This characteristic as well as his various influences and past experiences made him a natural fit into the theme that defined his famous writings as an absurdist. His writings showed the meaninglessness of life in the post-World War period and how there is absolutely nothing but frustration and unfulfilled expectations in life. His philosophy was that man was doomed to be lonely and that even if God were to exist, He would be as lonely and enslaved and as isolated as man is in a cold silent, indifferent universe. So, in his works, especially, *Waiting for Godot* he lampoons the idea of waiting on the supernatural to solve man's problems or as a way of escape from the world's harsh realities. He is described as an agnostic by most critics of his works and the tone of his writing is often pessimistic and enigmatic. He died in 1989 on 22nd of December, five months after his wife.

11.3.5 George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950)

George Bernard Shaw was born in July 1856 in Dublin, Ireland to George Carr Shaw who was a civil servant and Lucinda Elizabeth Shaw, a professional singer. He was the youngest child of the family and though he was first tutored by his Uncle who was a cleric, his education was irregular. He developed an early animosity to schools and schoolmasters, tagging the school as a prison meant to

prevent the children from disturbing their parents. He was not a successful novelist but made his mark as a successful playwright. He was a dramatist, literary critic and social propagandist. George Bernard Shaw stood out in the period for his role in portraying the economic hardship and social imbalance of the time with a vein of humour. He was an ardent socialist who decried the exploitation of the working class. In 1898 his early plays were published as *Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant*. The plays in the 'unpleasant' section were *Widower's House* (1892) which focused on rural or slum experiences with landlords; *The Philanderer* (1902); and *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (1902). The plays in the 'pleasant' section were *Arms and the Man* (1894) which satirized the romantic attitude to love and war; *Candida* (1893); and *You Never Can Tell* (written in 1895). These early plays introduced the British world to the activist in Bernard Shaw. The 'unpleasant' plays focused basically on lampooning the experiences of the working class of the society and aimed a veiled attack at the societal system which condones the misbehaviours of the upper class.

In 1901, he published *Three Plays for Puritans*. The plays in the volume were *The Devil's Disciple* (1897), a play which focused on the American Revolution and was successfully produced in New York City; *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1899) which clowned historical figures; and *Captain Brassbound's Conversion* (1900). It was in the early Twentieth Century that Shaw wrote his greatest and most popular plays. These plays are: *Man and Superman* (1903), which focused on how an idealistic, cerebral man eventually succumbs to marriage; *Major Barbara* (1905), which focuses on the fact that poverty is the cause of all evil; *Androcles and the Lion* (1912; a short play) and Pygmalion (1913), a play which satirized the English class system using the story of a cockney girl's transformation into a lady at the hands of a speech professor. *Pygmalion* has proved to be Shaw's most successful work. Among Shaw's later plays, *Saint Joan* (1923) is the one which is the most memorable; it argues that Joan of Arc, a harbinger of Protestantism and nationalism, had to be killed because the world was not yet ready for her. In 1920 Shaw, much criticized for his antiwar stance, wrote *Heartbreak House*, a play that exposed the spiritual bankruptcy of the generation responsible for World War I. Among Shaw's other plays are *John Bull's Other Island* (1904), *The Doctor's Dilemma* (1906), *Fanny's First Play* (1911), *Back to Methuselah* (1922), *The Apple Cart* (1928), *Too True to Be Good* (1932), *The Millionairess* (1936), *In Good King Charles's Golden Days* (1939), and *Buoyant Billions* (1949).

Shaw believed that the ideas of his plays were their most important feature. He examined man and his social institutions with intellectual courage and shrewd, irreverent insight. A major characteristic of George Bernard Shaw's works is that despite the fact that he writes about the harsh realities of life and on very serious topical issues, he presents them with a tone of humour in his plays. His plays use efficiently the comedy tool to show people their experiences and in some situations proffer solutions to the problems in the society. Hence his plays are called problem plays or drama of ideas. He mocked historical figures pointing out their faults which he does not support and sometimes extolled them. His strong use of language presented in a funny way without losing the message or toning down the effect made him a renowned writer. He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1925 and died in 1950.

11.3.6 Harold Pinter (1930-2008)

Harold Pinter was born on October 10th, 1930 in his parent's house in Hackney, north London. His parents' names were Jack and Francis Pinter. During the war, he and his family left London several times to avoid bomb drops. In 1944 he accepted a spot at Hackney Downs Grammar School, where he met Joe Brearley, an influential figure in his life. In 1947, Pinter was seen and reviewed in the News Chronicle. He had been acting in *Macbeth*. 1948 was a big year for Pinter. He was accepted to and attended the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. Later that year he was chosen by the National Service (akin to the American 'draft') but registered as a conscientious objector. He is eventually brought before a military tribunal and arrested. He dropped out of RADA and read and wrote while he applied

for acting jobs. He had strong antiwar ideas and refused to be enlisted in the military during the Second World War. He began to write poetry at an early age and his work was highly influenced by Samuel Beckett and T.S. Eliot. His works include *The Caretaker*, *The Servant*, *Accident*, *Mountain Language* and *The Homecoming* (1965) which is considered his masterwork. The play won a Tony Award and was later turned into a film. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2005 and he won other awards like Companion of Honour, Lawrence Olivier Award amongst others. He married Vivien Merchant but their marriage did not last and he later married Lady Antonia Fraser who was his wife until his death. He died of cancer in 2008.

He is regarded as one of the most influential modern dramatists in English Literature. Harold Pinter's experience of both the Turf war and World War II affected his writing, hence we find the theme of domination and power struggle in his works. As a young child, he suffered the effect of the world war and therefore when he reached the draft age, he objected to being drafted into the army. Although he did not have any strong religious belief, he saw himself as a conscientious objector who would not contribute to the continuance of the war. His writing career began in 1950 when two of his poems were published in Poetry London, a magazine. His first attempt at writing a play was unsuccessful though. His first major play, *The Birthday Party* was premiered in London in 1958 but was welcomed to a spate of bad reviews. In 1959, his play, *The Caretaker* had its first London performance and was opened to rave reviews in 1961 in New York City. In the 1960s his screenplay "The Servant" won the British Screenwriters' Guild Award. "The Pumpkin Eater" also won a British Film Academy Award for Best Screenplay. *When The Homecoming* was premiered in London in 1965, Pinter received a lot of accolades for the play. The play was tagged his cleverest play. The following year Pinter was awarded the C.B.E (Commander of the Order of the British Empire) by Queen Elizabeth. *The Homecoming transferred* to New York in 1967 where it won the Tony Award and the Drama Critics' Circle Award for Best Play. Pinter was appointed Associate Director of the newly formed National Theatre in 1973. His next play *The Betrayal* was produced against the backdrop of his own scandal about his affairs with Lady Antonia Fraser and the divorce from his wife Vivien Merchant. The play ironically focused on adultery in the literary circle. After the New York premier of *The Betrayal* in 1980, he married Fraser. He continued to write for film and his adaptation of "The French Lieutenant's Woman" was nominated for an Academy Award in 1982. His other screen plays include "The Comfort of Strangers." Following is the list of his plays:

- *The Room (1957) short*
- *The Birthday Party (1957)*
- *The Dumb Waiter (1957)*
- *A Slight Ache (1958) short*
- *The Hothouse (1958)*
- *The Caretaker (1959) screenplay (1963)*
- *A Night Out (1959)*
- *Night School (1960)*
- *The Dwarfs (1960)*
- *The Collection (1961) short*
- *The Lover (1962) short*
- *Tea Party (1964)*

- *The Homecoming (1964)*
- *The Basement (1966) short*
- *Landscape (1967)*
- *Silence (1968) short*
- *Old Times (1970)*
- *Monologue (1972)*
- *No Man's Land (1974)*
- *Betrayal (1978)*
- *Family Voices (1980)*
- *Other Places (1982)*
- *A Kind of Alaska (1982)*
- *Victoria Station (1982)*
- *One For The Road (1984)*
- *Mountain Languages (1988) short*
- *The New World Order (1991)*
- *Party Time (1991)*
- *Moonlight (1993)*
- *Ashes to Ashes (1996)*
- *Celebration (1999)*
- *Remembrance of Things Past (2000)*

11.3.7 T.S. Eliot (1888-1965)

Thomas Stearns Eliot was born in St Louis, Missouri to Henry Ware Eliot and Charlotte Stearns in 1888. He was the youngest of seven children. He attended Milton Academy and Harvard University. He worked as a banker for a while before he joined a publishing firm. He married Vivienne Haigh Wood in 1915 and after she died, he married Valerie Fletcher in 1957. He was a poet, playwright, critic and editor. He received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1948. He was a chronic smoker and had health problems. He died in 1965. Thomas Stearns Eliot's life was full of contradictions. Although he was an American from St Louis, he moved to England and took British citizenship. Although his life-long dream was to be a poet, Thomas Stearns Eliot went to Harvard to study philosophy. Although his poetry is full of Eastern philosophy, T. S. Eliot converted to Anglicanism. Even though he was one of the great intellectuals in the world, Eliot read detective fiction and wrote limericks about cats in his spare time. He revolutionalised poetry in his time, but now post-structuralist critics see him as a crypto-fascist. These contradictions marked his writing and reflected in his works.

He started writing at age fourteen and although his earliest writings were poetry, he would later start writing plays after he published his renowned poem, *The Waste Land*. Although he published bits and pieces of his play writing, but his first major drama piece was *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935) written about the death of Thomas Beckett. He also wrote *Sweeny Agonistes* (1926-27), *The Rock*

(1934) *The Family Reunion* (1939), *The Cocktail Party* (1949), *The Confidential Clerk* (1953), *and The Elder Statesmen* (1958) all as commercial plays. T.S. Eliot's plays stood out for their incursion of both the drama and poetry genres. The conversations between the characters are often in poetic form. His works made use of the tool of contradiction effectively. This tool, according to several scholars, is very evident in his Murder in the Cathedral where Thomas Beckett refused the advice of the fourth Tempter to release himself to be killed in order to attain the status of a martyr but ended up doing the very same thing. This sets him apart in the literary world and peaked after he published The Four Quartets. His works were central to the canonization of the English literature.

11.3.8 Sir James Matthew Barrie (1860-1937)

He was born in the small Scottish town of Kirriemuir ("Thrums"), and educated at the Edinburgh university and came to literature by way of journalism. Both as novelist and dramatist Barrie was a dreamer of dreams; his work is a blend of the highly improbable with the minutest realism. In fiction he belongs to the sentimental tradition and heads what has been called the Kailyard School, its other members being S.R. Crockett and Ian Maclaren. (Kailyard means a cabbage patch usually attached to a cottage). The Kailyard School of fiction is best represented by such sentimental pictures of idealised Scottish rustic life as *Auld Licht Idylls* (1888), *Window in Thrums* (1889), *The Little Minister* (1891), *and Margaret Ogilvie* (1896). The twin threads of humour and sentiment run through all these sketches the most popular, as also the longest, being *The Little Minister*. It is a romantic story of a young clergyman who falls in love with a charming and mischievous gipsy lass. It became a best-seller and was turned into a play in 1897. In Margaret Ogilvie, Barrie gave a biography of his mother. Barrie's other worth-reading stories are: *My Lady Nicotine* (1890), *Sentimental Tommy* (1896) and *Tommy and Grizel* (1900).

The same combination of romantic day-dream and naturalistic manner characterises his drama. He had a sense of character as well a sense of the theatre – the two qualities without which no play can succeed on the stage. In addition he had the native gifts of humour, pathos, irony, and above all, a singular touch of delicacy – a shyness or reserve which in a large measure accounts for the charm of his plays. As a dramatist, Barrie is outside the main line of realistic drama of Ibsen, Shaw and Galsworthy. The themes of most of his plays are fantasies, but his skilful treatment of them made him as successful on the commercial stage as the others were on the Independent. *Peter Pan*, a pure fairy play, has had a regular season every year since it was first produced in 1904. *Dear Brutus* (1920), another pure fantasy is also most likely to endure. Because of present day dislike of sentiment, Barrie is not in high favour, but audiences in the 1890s and the early years of the twentieth century were still unashamedly sentimental, and enthusiastically welcomed such plays as *The Professor's Love Story* (1894), *The Little Minister* (1897), *Alice-Sit-by-the Fire* (1905), *A Kiss for Cinderella* (1916), and *Mary Rose* (1920).

In 1902, Barrie surprised his public by producing a play dealing with a basic problem, that of class barriers in British society. The play was *The Admirable Crichton* (1902). In its own kind it is a master-piece. It presents in a critical spirit the weakness of the English social hierarchy, but suggests no remedy. It is criticism, but neither thesis nor propaganda. The only other full-length play which treats a social problem is *What Every Woman Knows* (1908). There are, however, several one-act plays which are frankly realistic; such as, *The Twelve Pound Look* (1910), *Rosalind* (1912), *The Will* (1913), *The Old Lady Shows Her Medals* (1917), and *Shall We Join the Ladies?* (1921). A definitive (revised) edition of Barrie's collected plays was published in 1942.

11.3.9 William Somerset Maugham (1874-1965)

William Somerset Maugham was born in Paris in 1874. He spoke French even before he spoke a word of English, a fact to which some critics attribute the purity of his style.

His parents died early and, after an unhappy boyhood, which he recorded poignantly in *Of Human Bondage*, Maugham became a qualified physician. But writing was his true vocation. For ten years before his first success, he almost literally starved while pouring out novels and plays. Maugham wrote at a time when experimental modernist literature such as that of William Faulkner, Thomas Mann, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf was gaining increasing popularity and winning critical acclaim. In this context, his plain prose style was criticized as 'such a tissue of clichés' that one's wonder is finally aroused at the writer's ability to assemble so many. During World War I, Maugham worked for the British Secret Service. He travelled all over the world, and made many visits to America. After World War II, Maugham made his home in south of France and continued to move between England and Nice till his death in 1965. At the time of Maugham's birth, French law was such that all foreign boys born in France became liable for conscription. Thus, Maugham was born within the Embassy, legally recognized as UK territory.

Between 1904 and 1933, when he finally abandoned the stage, because of failure of his bitter comedy *Sheppey*, Maugham wrote some thirty plays, often at the rate of two or three a year. Though by 1914 he had written more than ten plays, his most memorable, though not his most profitable, work belonged to the inter-war period. After the realistic tragedy of *A Man of Honour* (1903) he made his name and fortune with gay, light-hearted comedies, full of wit and epigram. Among them were *Lady Frederick* (1907), *Mrs. Dot* (1908), and *Jack Straw* (1908). The last of these purely commercial plays was *Home and Beauty* (1919). Two years later appeared *The Circle* (1921), a true comedy of manners and his best play. *Our Betters*, which though produced in New York in 1917 was not seen in England until 1923, and *The Constant Wife* (1927) are in the same tradition. Maugham's temperament was ideal for comedy of this kind. A shrewd observer of life and a keen student of human nature, he was a highly intelligent man of the world, cherishing few illusions, and rarely admitting any trace of sentimentality into his drama. His best plays are the ironical comment of a cynically humorous observer, aiming to present life as it really is. In many ways he reminds us of the Restoration dramatists. Maugham is an uneven dramatist, whose work shows considerable diversity of tone and mood. He offered realistic tragedy in *A Man of Honour* and the much better *For Services Rendered* (1932); the glitter of the early comedies; the true comedy of manners; and occasionally the stronger and more serious situations of *Cæsar's Wife* (1919), *The Letter* (1927), and *The Sacred Flame* (1928).

11.3.10 John Osborne (1929-1994),

He was an English dramatist who first came into prominence when his play, Look Back in Anger, was produced at the Royal Court Theatre by the English Stage Company. It was their first outstanding success, and the date of the first night, 8 May 1956, is something of a landmark in the modern theatre. Osborne, who was for some years an actor, making his first appearance in 1948, and remaining a member of the Royal Court company until 1957, wrote a number of plays, including *The Entertainer* (1957) in which Laurence Olivier gave an outstanding performance as the seedy music-hall artiste Archie Rice. *Epitaph for George Dillon* (1958) and *The World of Luther* (1959) were less successful, but *Luther* (1961), which had its first production by the English Stage Company at the Theatre des Nations in Paris, with Albert Finney in the name-part. In 1962 Osborne was responsible for a double bill at the Royal Court, but none of these plays reached the standard of his first two, which have been translated and acted in cities all over the world. In 1964 *Inadmissible Evidence*, in which Nicol Williamson gave a fine performance, was a success. A year later, *A Patriot for Me* was refused a license by the Lord Chamberlain and was therefore staged privately (by Tony Richardson) for members of the English Stage Society Club. The chief part was played by a famous Swiss actor, Maximilian Schell, making his first appearance in England. Osborne won an Oscar for his screenplay of *Tom Jones*.

11.4 LET'S SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed about modern playwrights and novelists of English Literature. Modern play wrights and novelists put their best to ensure the foremost place for these two literary genres. Gloomy shadow of the two world wars made literary minds of the age to lose faith in humanity and a well organised social order and they began to find out meanings in the absurdity of things. The Modern Age saw development of the genre of novel as it has never been in the history of literature and the novel from the representation of the external world became a vehicle of outpouring of the inner consciousness of the human beings. The achievements of the modern novelists are such that even today we are being mesmerized by their creations. During the twentieth century, especially after World War I, Western drama became more internationally unified and less the product of separate national literary traditions. Throughout the century realism, naturalism, and symbolism (and various combinations of these) continued to inform important plays. Among the many twentieth century playwrights who have written what can be broadly termed naturalist dramas are John Galsworthy (English), John Millington Synge and Sean O'Casey (Irish), and Eugene O'Neill, Clifford Odets, and Lillian Hellman (American). World War II and its attendant horrors produced a widespread sense of the utter meaninglessness of human existence. This sense is brilliantly expressed in the body of plays that have come to be known collectively as the theater of the absurd. By abandoning traditional devices of the drama, including logical plot development, meaningful dialogue, and intelligible characters, absurdist playwrights sought to convey modern humanity's feelings of bewilderment, alienation, and despair—the sense that reality is itself unreal. In their plays human beings often portrayed as dupes, clowns who, although not without dignity, are at the mercy of forces that are inscrutable.

11.5 QUESTIONS

- Make a brief assessment of the contribution Henry James in the field of modern novel.
- What are the main themes in the novels Joseph Conrad?
- Write a short not on D. H. Lawrence as a psychological novelist.
- Attempt a short note on James Joyce's use of stream of consciousness technique in his novels.
- Discuss Virgina Woolf as a feminist writer.
- Analyse the contribution of Henrik Ibsen in the field of modern drama.
- Assess the contribution of J.M. Synge in the rebirth of Irish Theatre.
- Discuss John Galsworthy as a writer of problem plays.
- Discuss Samuel Beckett as an absurdist playwright.

11.6 FURTHER READINGS

- History of English Literature by Edward Albert.
- A Short History of English Literature by Ifor Evans.
- English Literature: Its History and Significance by William J. Long.
- History of English Literature by Legouis and Cazamian.
- http://www.online-literature.com
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main Page
- WWW. Algappauniversity.ac.in

- WWW.Jammuuniversity.ac.in
- The Cambridge Guide to literature in English.
- The Cambridge History of English literature.
- The Norton Anthology of English Literature. Volume 1, by W.W. Norton & Company.
- A Critical History of English Literature by Dr. B.R. Mullick.
- An Outline History of English Literature, by William Henry Hudson.
- The Routledge History of Literature in English.
- A Short History of English Literature by Pramod K. Nayar.

Unit–12 IMPORTANT LITERARY TRENDS AND TEXTS

Structure

12.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- Know about different trends in poetry, prose, fiction and drama.
- Analyse how the different writers use these trends in their works.
- Understand how the social, political and cultural predicament of the modern age forced writers to deviate from preceding literary trends.
- Analyse how the new masters of literature expressed their thoughts through these new trends in literature.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

The two World Wars and their effects had shaken the whole of the humankind and more so the whole of Europe. The effects of the World Wars were such that mankind lost faith in fellow human beings and therefore a sense of loneliness crept into the minds and consciousness of the modern man. The biggest change that we perceive in the literature of the first half of the twentieth century from that of the earlier Victorian Age is that the literature of the age was shifting from the exterior realism to the inner aspects of the humankind. The writers and poets of the age looked within the human consciousness and human mind and portrayed the anxieties that the modern mind suffered from. Modernist writers had a new 'subject matter' for literature as they believed that their new way of looking at life required a new form, a new way of thinking and writing. Consequently, writers were more experimental, innovative and very individualistic in their writing. Therefore, they tried to do something pioneering in their writing as they were influenced by new ideas from the emerging fields of psychology and sociology. One of the main focus of the modernist writers was to probe the 'unconscious' as the theories put forward by Sigmund Freud had a huge impact on the everyday existence.

12.2 TRENDS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY LITERATURE

Long before 1918 it had become obvious that in poetry, in the novel, and in drama the old traditional forms were outworn. Experimenters in all three fields were evolving new forms to sustain the new demands being made upon them. Progress is most rapid in the drama, but the novel too, in the hands of great masters, underwent revolutionary changes, the importance of which is sometimes underestimated because they were overshadowed by more startling experiments of the inter-War period. In poetry experiments were less sensational, and the bulk of the poetry published was in the traditional manner. For the first time poetry was least significant of the important literary forms and this lasted for many years.

With the end of the Victorian Age at the death of Queen Victoria in 1901, there was a change in the circumstances in England which produced certain changes in the literary output. It can be said that the modern period marks a sharp and clear departure from the self- complacency, compromise and stability of the Victorian period. The transition from the old to the new, from blind faith to rational thinking is very interesting to note. If the Victorian art was more inclined to portray the external reality (Realism), then the modernists attempted to reflect the inner turmoil, the inner reality of man. Therefore, there is less emphasis on art's reflection of external reality and a greater emphasis on art's reflection of the perceiving mind; it can be seen not only in fiction and poetry, but also in painting. In the modern period, more than in any other period, literature was employed for social purposes. Through their writings, the modern poets and authors sought to reform the age-old maladies which existed till that time. Modern literature became a source of propaganda and through it, modern problems were discussed. There were new experiments in all fields of literature. The traditional forms were replaced by a new literary approach in poetry, drama, novel, and prose. It was a natural upshot for the search for new values, and new radical tradition was created. These revolutionary developments were communicated through all the major literary genres.

12.2.1 Trends in Modern English Poetry

Manifold Themes

Much that is traditional and Victorian still persists in modern poetry. Twentieth century poetry is a curious mixture of the traditional and the experimental. It is a curious mixture of the old and the new. It is complex and many-sided. Complexity, abundance of output, revolt against tradition, love of nature, pity for the poor and the suffering, disillusionment, loss of faith in religion, the metaphysical note, the romantic strain, the influence of music and other fine arts and new techniques are main trends of modern poetry. In the poetry of Thomas Stearns Eliot, we see several of these trends. In a sense, he has broken completely the bridge between romanticism and modernism. Moreover, he has influenced Modern poetry to a great extent and main trends of modern poetry. Modern poets wrote on real-lifestyles subject matters. But the sector of faith, mysticism and fairyland also located a place in their poetry. Thus, within the present day age, we have poetry on an intensive range of subjects. John Davidson's *The Songs of Train*, Kenneth Ashley's *Good Train at Night*, Edmund Gosse's *The Charcoal Burner*, Richard Aldington's *Machine Guns*, Masefield's *Seekers*, and Walter De La Mare's *Listeners* throw light on enormous variety of contemporary issues.

Philanthropic and Democratic Element

Philanthropic and democratic emotions are the most important issues of contemporary poetry. Modern poets are inquisitive about the life of labourers, toilers and people within the discipline. Masefield, Gibson, Galsworthy are interested in the sufferings of everyday humans. The poem *Consecration* via Masefield is a representative poem. The challenge for animals is likewise discovered in those poems. Galsworthy's *Stupidity Street* is sympathy for birds. In *The Bells of Heaven* Hodgson shows sympathy for performing tigers who have turned tamed and shabby tigers at

the side of other animals like dogs and bears.

Realism

As a reaction against the pseudo-romanticism of the previous century, the poetry of the twentieth century is marked with the tone of realism. The modern-day poets removed the veil that romantics had hung among lifestyles and artwork and present life with warts and ugliness. Edmund Blunden in *The Poor Man's Pig*, W.W. Gibson in *The Stone*, Robert Brooke in *The Greater Lover*, and John Masefield in *Cargoes* strike the note of realism. The horrors of battle had been realistically described by Owen, Graves, and Sassoon. Sassoon's *Counter Attack* is a great example of realism.

Romantic Element

Despite the stress on realism in modern poetry, romance continued to drift within the writings of poets like Walter De La Mare and Flecker. Their poetry explores the elements of supernaturalism. Flecker created the oriental atmosphere in his poem *The Old Ships*. The dim moonlight of chivalry and romance is reflected within the early poems of Gibson.

Pessimism

The slightness of human life and the tragedy and dilemma of the underprivileged human beings has created an unhappy tone and given upward push to disillusionment and pessimism in cutting-edge poetry. Housman, T.S. Eliot, Hardy, Huxley constitute pessimistic stress. They all are discontented with God and the materialism inside the modern-day existence is depicted in a pessimistic manner in their poetry.

Creed of Religion and Mysticism

Though the scientific approach has prevailed over the current age in every element of lifestyles, the poems are composed on religion and mysticism. Charlotte Mew, W.B. Yeats, George Russell, Robert Graves, G.K. Chesterton, Belloc, and Francis Thompson are the poets who have contemplated on faith and mysticism in their poetry. In modern poetry, Thomson's *Hounds of Heaven* and *In Strange Land* may be considered as the fine poems on religion.

The Theme of Love

Love has been an outstanding topic and shape of many current lyrics. W.B. Yeats's *When You are Old* is a masterpiece of love. The sadness in love is dealt with in Arthur Symon's *The Broken Tryst.*

Outlook towards Nature

The Modern poets are exhilarated on the sight of nature's beauty. The stunning depiction of birds, landscapes, nation-state and other matters of nature is present in their poetry. However, they don't find anything like spirituality in nature. Masefield, Edmund Blunden, and Robert Bridges represent this aspect towards nature.

Complexity and Psychology

Complexity and psychology are typical features of current poetry. Modern age have poets who delve into the recesses of the unconscious mind. The poems of Ezra Pound, are difficult to understand and difficult to observe because of their complexity and modern imagery.

Sense of Longing in Modern Poetry

Sense of longing is the basic issue in modern-day poetry. A sense of nostalgia and longing is common in modern poetry. W.B. Yeats' *The Lake Isle of Innisfree* is a name of the homesick coronary

heart. Rupert Brookes' *Old Vicarage, Grantchester* and John Masefield's *Seekers* is a cry of longing for God. A yearning for home, a sense of regret and a longing for belonging are common in modern poetry.

Diction and Style

Modern poets have preferred simple and direct expression rather than complex and tough diction. Archaic words and utilisation is now not considered part of literary fashion. The words they choose have the energy of expressiveness which is given a whole lot of significance. Only words conveying which means are chosen and hired. Moreover, free verse is utilised in present day poetry. The contemporary poets have for many part experimented with versification as per their individual pursuits and expertise. Verse rhythm is now replaced with the aid of sense rhythm.

12.2.2 Trends in Modern English Novel

The modern age is pleasantly called the age of the novel. The remarkable novelists like John Galsworthy, Joseph Conrad, D.H. Laurence, Henry James, H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett, Aldous Huxley, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf have marked their identities through their great fictions. *To the Lighthouse*, is an amazing novel written inside the cutting-edge generation. The subject blanketed with the aid of present day novelists is huge and variegated. Multiple themes associated with human lives are treated by using the novelists. It is multitudinous inside the difficulty count, method, form, and style.

The Novel of Ideas

The novel of the modern generation discusses troubles in society in the first decade of the 20th century. The Edwardian novel changed drastically into what is known as novels of ideas because exceptional types of ideas, along with clinical, social, political, and industrial are found in it. Galsworthy, H. G. Wells, and Arnold Bennett popularised the unconventional novel as a device of social propaganda. The novel in their hands geared toward highlighting the social and home problems, especially the ones of middle and upper-middle classes.

Realism

The problems of life gave a touch of realism to Edwardian fiction. H.G. Wells realistically depicted the sufferings of the draper's assistants in *Kipps* and *Mr. Polly*. We find a sensible image of the woes of negative humans in the fiction of George Gissing and Aldous Huxley. Victorian materialism and greed for property are projected in John Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga*.

Love of Romance and Adventure

The realistic subject matter of Edwardian fiction located a rival within the form of the romances, by way of Conrad and Kipling. *The Nigger of Narcissus, The Heart of Darkness, Lord Jim, Rescue* and *Rover* are the well-known works of Conrad which might be complete of romance and journey. Kipling's *Jungle Books* are packed with the romance of the jungle and his *Soldiers Three* with romance that of barracks.

Sex and Primal Human Emotions

During the Georgian period, English fiction, started taking glorification in physical intercourse and primal human feelings. The works of D. H. Lawrence and Aldous Huxley are well worth mentioning here. These novelists popularised the conference and depiction of sex. *The Rainbow by* D. H. Lawrence and *Point Counter Point* by Aldous Huxley, illustrate this.

Psychological Fiction and Stream of consciousness Technique

In the later part of the Georgian period, the current novel came under the impact of psychological

theories. A new method referred to as psychological fiction advanced, and this discovered its nice exposition in the move of stream of consciousness. William James, Dorothy Richardson, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf are well- acknowledged writers of this type. These novelists had the expressionist technique of presenting the characters. In this method the movements and sayings of characters were now not stated. They discovered their innermost idea, moods and emotions. Dorothy Richardson provided the stories of Miriam Henderson in Printed Roofs. James Joyce's Ulysses is a psychological novel fashioned in the form of stream of consciousness.

Science Fiction

The mental fashion in modern-day fiction collaborates with technological know-how for reason of romance. The medical romances of H.G. Wells including *Time Machine*, *The Invisible Man* are woven round clinical love. *The Brave New World* with the aid of Aldous Huxley satirizes the situations added approximately by using technological know-how.

Detective Fiction

Arthur Conan Doyle is known for popularising detective fiction. In his *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, he followed a form which found a finishing touch in the Twentieth Century Fiction of G. K. Chesterton and Edgar Wallace.

Regional Fiction

Modern fiction also witnessed the boom of regional fiction. The Wessex novel of Thomas Hardy is traditional in this class. Arnold Bennett's tales of the five cities in *Old Wives' Tale* and *Clayhanger* Series are illustrations of regionalism. Mary Webb has in her *Precious Bone*, depicted Shropshire surroundings. Similarly, Sheila Kaye Smith gave the picture of Sussex in *The End of the House of Alard.*

12.2.3 Trends in Twentieth-Century Drama

Modern English drama began in the 90s of the last century under the influence of the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen. Due to the upward push of the novel as most powerful literary genre, drama saw its decline throughout the Victorian Era. But it became a prominent literary genre on the inception of the twentieth century. During the course of almost six decades drama witnessed many dispositions and currents.

Realism

Realism is one of the most essential sub-forms of contemporary drama. Norwegian dramatist, Henrik Ibsen has regularly been credited with placing the term and circulating it globally. He explored bottled problems of actual lifestyles in a practical way. Playwrights like Galsworthy, Bernard Shaw, Robertson, Jones, and Pinero accompanied the identical literary tendency for their creative writing. The realistic works provide the readers glimpses of real-life with sordid realities full of its trial and tribulations. Problems like prostitution, regulation, marriage, justice, management and ideological war between the capitalist and workers have been at the heart in the practical plays. Playwrights used their plays as a weapon to carry social alternate via getting rid of evil and maladies from regular society.

Problem Play

The term Problem Play is employed as an extension in the direction of Realism in Modern plays, particularly after Ibsen. Such plays attempt to seize burning problems of the contemporary age via civil arguments between the literary agents and the spectators. Moreover, it normally indicated that the prerogative of the person shapes his destiny for that reason as per his perception and doctrine, unclouded via prejudices and orthodox styles in the society. It championed the democratic reason of Equality, Fraternity and Justice.

Drama of Ideas

Modern drama emphasises extra on thoughts in preference to physical actions. That is why it is called Drama of Ideas. The dramatists of this period are driven by using the reason of introducing thoughts to engineer social reform. George Bernard Shaw's "Arms and the Man" challenges the popular view of heroism and war. Through his mouthpiece, Captain Bluntschli, Shaw brings forth the futility and practical reasons behind shunning war, proving there is nothing heroic about war. Ibsen's plays, such as "A Doll's House" and "An Enemy of the People," delve into moral and societal issues. These plays spark conversations about individual freedom and societal expectations.

Romanticism

Although the twentieth century literature was centered on the above-mentioned characteristics, the passage of time re-delivered new as well as old literary developments like Romanticism, which was initiated throughout Elizabethan Age again found its way into modern drama particularly because of Sir J. M. Barrie. It was Barrie's effort that changed the canon of drama once in a while. Readers have been fascinated by supernaturalism, romance and magic developments in the plays like *Peter Pan*, *Mary Rose*, *Dear Brutus,* and *A Kiss for Cinderella* and *Admirable Crichton*. Such plays provide remedy to the readers inside the morbid fact of lifestyles.

Poetic Plays

One of the tremendous achievements of the modern age is the introduction of Poetic Plays that tried to reshape the collective psyche of the time. Yeats, at Abbey Theatre, attempted to revive poetic drama but could not be triumphant. It was left to T. S. Eliot who gave this form, the shape and reputation. Playwrights like J.E. Flecker, John Drinkwater, John Masefield, Stephen Philips and W.B. Yeats have been among the few who were part of this contemporary literary revolution.

Historical Plays

Another trend that was popular in the modern age was to use history and biography as a raw material for finished literary products. John Drinkwater wrote four historical plays namely *Abraham Lincoln*, *Mary Stuart*, *Robert Lee* and *Oliver Cromwell*. Shaw's contributions that fall in this category include *Caesar and Cleopatra*. Clifford Bax penned many historical plays. *Mr. Pepys, Socrates, The Venetian* to name a few.

Impressionism

Impressionism forms yet another equally significant feature of modem drama. W. B. Yeats, in his plays aimed at reshaping and recreating new patterns and versions of reality and appearance rather than in presenting reality as it appears. In the Impressionistic drama of the modern age, the artist was the heart of the subject matter, not the impression it forms on others, giving statement about outer reality.

Expressionism

Expressionism is a literary movement that was a reaction against supernaturalism. Originated in Germany, it entered English drama and many modem dramatists were influenced by it. The important authors under its influence are Sean O'Casey, C.K. Munro, H.F. Rubinstein, J.B. Priestley, Elmer Rice, and Eugene O'Neill. Man was the epicenter of expressionist drama and not society.

The Comedy of Manners

The Comedy of Manners is a form that existed during the Restoration. It revived during the modern period through the plays of Oscar Wilde, Noel Coward, and Somerset Maugham. However, after the Second World War, social conditions were not favourable for the blossoming of this artificial

comedy.

Stage Directions

Modern dramatists also provide detailed stage suggestions. These directions make things easy when it comes to performance on stage. The plays of Galsworthy and Bernard Shaw have detailed stage directions.

Technique

The three classical unities of time, place and action are taken care of in Modern Drama. Dialogues in it are short and trenchant. The lack of action is made up by fine dialogues. There is no scope for soliloquies and asides in modern drama.

12.2.4 Trends in Modern English Prose

During the twentieth century, the periodical essay and the personal essay which had been made popular by earlier writers of the eighteenth and the nineteenth century were reintroduced. The important essayists of the period are Robert Lynd, A.G. Gardiner, J.B. Priestly, C.E. Montague, and Aldous Huxley. The essays of J.B. Priestly are literary and critical as well as penetrating and sharp. C.E. Montague in his essays inspires readers to enjoy life to the optimum. Aldous Huxley's essays always have a satirical element.

Travel Literature

The east has always drawn the attention of the minds of English travelers. They enriched literature by their description of the Orients. The ancient civilizations, patriarchal habits, which seem close to the contents of the *Old Testament* are presented in these works. Their love of practical adventure is combined with the love of the romantic and the mystical making these writings more interesting. Some essayists who contributed to this form are:

T. E. Lawrence

Lawrence's work *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* is a prose writing of the Modern period which recounts the fights of the Arabs against the Turks. It draws a picture of the traditional manners and customs of the Arab community.

H.M. Tomlinson

Tomlinson's *The Sea and the Jungle* has a vivid description of his travel to South America. His another work, London River is about a port from where ships sailed to the seven seas. In Face of the Earth, he has depicted a voyage from England to Spain.

Sacheverell Sitwell

Sitwell's works are about the journey and the adventure, people and scenery of foreign countries. He has an elaborated observation of the places he had visited and the art, architecture, music, literature, festivals of these countries makes his works rich and interesting. *Southern Baroque Art, The Gothic North, Touching the Orient and Prime Scenes and Festivals* are his famous works of travel observations.

Hilaire Belloc

Belloc's work *The Path to Rome* belongs to the literature of travel. The book is a diary on his travel on foot. It covers the description of nature and churches, from Toul, down the valley of Moselle, to Italy, in a graphic manner.

Prose of Nature and Country Life

The important writers who have projected nature and country life in their prose works are Sir William Beach Thomas and Henry Williamson. Sir William Beach Thomas' primary interest was in the rural matter. He was of the view that the Labour Government regarded the countryside only from an economic perspective. He supported the creation of national parks in England and Wales. His book *The English Landscape* as the name suggests is about English country life and nature. Henry Williamson wrote a number of books on wildlife and the countryside. The chief of his works are *The Love swallows*, *The Old Stage*, and Tarka the Other. He was careful and sincere in his observation of nature and ardently opposed materialism.

Biographical, Autobiographical and Historical Prose

Lytton Strachey

Strachey's biographies, both longer and shorter are highly readable and written in excellent style, proportion, and structure. He possessed a rare gift of breathing life into his subjects. He does not describe historical facts coldly but transmutes them into throbbing life. *Eminent Victorians* and *Queen Victoria* are his famous works which are in biographical form.

Phillip Guedalla

Phillip Guedalla is known for biographies that hold the reader's attention by wit. *Supers and Superman*, *Masters and Men*, and *A Gallery* are his famous works. They depict the fine sketches of Victorians and their contemporaries. He wrote a biographical book devoted to individuals titled *Palmerston* and *The Duke of Wellington*.

Osbert Sitwell

Osbert Sitwell another biographer earned eminence through the writings that brought out the history of his own family. It is in five volumes, titled, *Left hand right hand*, *The Scarlet Tree*, *Great Morning, Laughter in the Next Room* and *Noble Essence*. Along with the portrayal of his father, friends and relatives, these works also show his love for the past and his disgust for the present.

During the twentieth century there has been a rapid growth of historical writings. Sir James Frazer and A.J. Toynbee are remarkable historians of the modern age. Frazer was scientific and Toynbee is philosophical in his approach to history. Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* presents a collection of the knowledge of ancient civilization and primitive societies, their religions, myths, and legends. A.J. Toynbee's *A Study of History* studies the complete history of the creation and destruction of ancient civilizations. He warns that if militarism and materialism continue to advance, they would destroy humanity and civilization.

12.3 LITERARY CRITICS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Some of the celebrated and reputed literary critics of the modern age are A.C. Bradley, Walter Raleigh, George Saintsbury, T.S. Eliot, I.A. Richards and Cleanth Brooks.

A.C. Bradley

A.C. Bradley's famous work, *Shakespearean Tragedy* is a scholarly and critical survey of the main tragedies of Shakespeare. His other important work *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* presents his views on poetry and gives information on poets.

Sir Walter Raleigh

Sir Walter Raleigh is remembered for his critical writings titled *English Novel*, *Milton*,

Wordsworth, *Shakespeare* and *Six Essays on Johnson*. He is essentially the traditionalist and has not propounded any theory.

George Saintsbury

George Saintsbury occupies an important place in the world of literary criticism through his works, *Elizabethan Literature*, *History of English Prose*, *History of English Criticism*, *History of European Criticism* and *The Peace of the Augustans*.

F.R. Leavis

Influenced by T.S. Eliot, F.R. Leavis in *New Bearings in English Poetry* attacked English late Victorian English poetry and announced the significance of the works of T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and Gerald Manley Hopkins. In his next work, *Revaluation: Tradition and Development in English Poetry*, he surveyed English poetry back to the 17th century. Similarly, in the essay *The Great Tradition* he reassessed English novels.

T.S. Eliot

Eliot strongly influenced the school of New Criticism. His essay, *Tradition and Individual Talent* introduced the idea that the value of a work of art must be viewed in the context of the artist's previous literary tradition. It influenced the New Criticism.

To New Criticism, he contributed an idea of Objective Correlative, through his essay, *Hamlet and His Problems*. The term refers to a connection between words of text and events to state of mind and experiences of the characters. Along with the above-mentioned criticism Eliot's essays have turned out to be a vital factor in the revival of interest in metaphysical poets. His essay *The Metaphysical Poets* introduced his now well-known definition of "unified sensibility", which is considered by some to mean the same thing as the term "metaphysical". He differentiates the Metaphysical poetry from the Romantic and takes the side of the former one. His another well-known concept is 'disassociated sensibility'.

12.4 LET'S SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed modern literary trends and texts and cause of their emergence. After the two world wars man deviated from old established beliefs in humanity and philanthropy. Man was subjected to gloom and despair. In Twentieth Century Literature, there were certain moves and breakaways from the traditions that the Victorians had retained. There was also a breakaway from the sort of actual life experiences being represented. More complicated studies have been occurring making writers reconsider deep the present and future of humanity. Modernist literature, typically focuses on the individual rather than the society. Particularly, modernist writers were captivated and enamoured with how the individual adapted to the changing world. In various cases, the individual succeeded over hardships and hindrance. To a large extent, the Modernist literature presented such characters who just kept their heads above water. Writers of this movement exhibited the world or society as a challenge to the honesty and integrity of their characters. Poets rejected and relinquished traditional rhyme schemes and started writing in free verse. Novelists defied and challenged all expectations. Writers mixed the images from the past with modern languages and themes, creating a collage of styles. The inner workings of consciousness were a common subject and theme for modernists. This common subject and theme led to a new form of narration, which was called stream of consciousness and in this narration, the point of view of the novel drifts and meanders in a pattern resembling human thought. For several writers, the world was becoming a more absurd and senseless place every day. The mysteriousness of life was being lost and disoriented in the rush of daily life. The irrational and senseless violence and brutality of World War II was though more evidence that humanity had lost its way. Modernist authors have portrayed this absurdity and senselessness in their

works.

12.5 QUESTIONS

- Write a short note on the theme of Romanticism in Modern English Poetry.
- Write a brief note on the Novelists of Modern English literature.
- Attempt a short note on stage directions and techniques applied by modern dramatists.
- How does the 'Humanitarian and Democratic' note in Modern Poetry contribute towards Realism?
- Write an essay on the major forms of fiction that existed during the Modern Age of English Literature.

12.6 FURTHER READINGS

- M.H. Abrams' A Handbook of Literary Terms.
- Glimpses, Trends in Literatures in English edited by Datta G. Sawant.
- R.D Trivedi's A Compendious History of English Literature.
- Literary Forms, Trends and Movements by Dr. Raghukul Tilak.
- A Book on English Literary Trends by Konda Murali.
- A Companion to Literary Forms by Padmaja Ashok.
- https://www.manuu.edu.in

INTRODUCTION TO BLOCK IV

Dear learners! This block is aimed at making you aware of Postcolonial Literature. This block is also divided into four units from the 13th to the 16th. Unit 13th focuses on Post colonialism and socio-political, cultural and literary background of it. This block deals with postcolonial literature that explores the impacts and legacies of colonialism on cultures, societies, and individuals. It often examines themes like identity, power dynamics, resistance, and the effects of colonial rule on both the colonizers and the colonized. The 14th unit aims to discuss one of the most talented literary personality of Hindi literature Namvar Singh and his translated essay 'Decolonising the Indian Mind'. The essay is a critical work that addresses the cultural and intellectual impacts of colonialism on Indian society. It explores how colonial rule has shaped the Indian psyche and the ways in which decolonization involves. The 15th Unit deals with one of most remarkable critic Gayatri C. Spivak: and her famous essay ‘Can the Subaltern speak'. In this unit, Spivak examines the challenges faced by marginalized groups (the "subaltern") in being heard and represented within dominant discourses. The 16th and last unit of the block discusses one of most talented literary personality of Hindi novel Munshi Prem Chand ; and his famous essay 'Karmbhumi . In short, after studying this block, you will be able to understand the philosophical, psychological, and realistic ways of thinking about Postcolonial literature.

UNIT-13 POST COLONIALISM : SOCIO-POLITICAL, CULTURAL AND LITERARY BACKGROUND

Structure

13.0 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit, we shall briefly discuss the postcolonial literature. In addition to this, we shall also discuss the intellectual, social and political reasons that influenced this concept of literary genre and gave a certain direction to its subsequent development. After reading this unit carefully, you will be able to :

- Understand the main trends in postcolonial literature;
- Describe the social and political reason in its development;
- Discuss the historical background of postcolonial literature.
- Discuss the important postcolonial writers and their works.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

In all the previous blocks, we have discussed several literary genres which come from a different culture, tradition and ideas. In this unit, we are going to begin to learn postcolonial literature from its initial point of origin and development with historical background. All these aspects will help us in understanding the major concepts of it. Postcolonial literature refers to literary works produced in or about regions that were formerly colonized by European powers. This body of literature often explores the impacts of colonization on cultures, identities, and societies. Do go through all the sections and answer the questions given in 'Check Your Progress'. This will help you to remember what you have read and also give you some practice in expressing yourself in your own words. We do

hope you enjoy working through this unit.

13.2 DETAILED STUDY OF POST COLONIAL LITERATURE

'Post colonialism' is more of a global phenomenon. It is more of a political and ideological notion than that of a linear temporal one. The ideological stance of postcolonialism takes roots in decolonization, which implies methods and practices of opposing and negating the effects of colonization. Postcolonial literatures emerged as a resistance to said colonial politics by critiquing the 'universal narratives of European enlightenment. The ideological and political motive of the postcolonial writers was to hit hard at the constructed 'centre of the colonial discourse and to bring their own cultures from the margin towards to the centre. Hence, we can say that the postcolonial writers took it as a crusade to bring their own respective cultures into the forefront of the universal narratives by resisting to, critiquing, and negating the Eurocentric colonialist narratives. Several major writers have significantly contributed to the post-colonial literary tradition, each offering unique perspectives on the impact of colonialism and the complexities of post-colonial identity. Here are some of the most influential post-colonial writers who paid major role in this genre. The following sections will be divided to better understand the four major sites of emerging postcolonial literatures African, Australian, Caribbean, and Indian.

13.2.1 AFRICAN POSTCOLONIALISM

Post colonialism in Africa refers to the period following the end of colonial rule in Africa in the mid-20th century, when African countries gained independence. After decolonization, they began to define their own political, economic, and social structures and adopted a range of political ideologies, including socialism, democracy, and authoritarianism. Some countries, such as Tanzania and Ghana, embraced socialism and sought to build strong, centralized state structures. Others, such as Kenya and Nigeria, experimented with multi-party democracy, but faced challenges in creating strong, stable political systems.

The postcolonial period in Africa was marked by a wave of nationalist and pan-Africanist movements, which sought to promote African unity and identity. These movements were inspired by figures such as Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, and Patrice Lumumba, who advocated for the decolonization of Africa and the creation of a united African continent. Given below are brief accounts of the most influential postcolonial writers from the continent of Africa.

- **Frantz Fanon (1925-1961)**

Frantz Omar Fanon (1925–1961) was a French psychiatrist, philosopher, and revolutionary writer from Martinique. He's best known for his works on the psychology of colonization and the effects of colonialism on the human psyche. His most famous books include *"Black Skin, White Masks"* and *"The Wretched of the Earth"*. In the former book, Fanon explores the impact of colonialism on the identity and self-perception of Black individuals. He examines how the colonial experience affects psychological well-being and the development of a sense of self, particularly in the context of racial identity and cultural assimilation.

In *"The Wretched of the Earth"*, Fanon offers a critical analysis of the decolonization process and the struggle for liberation. He argues that the process of decolonization is inherently violent due to the deep-seated nature of colonial oppression. Fanon discusses the social and psychological implications of colonial rule and advocates for revolutionary change as a means to achieve true freedom and equality.

Fanon's work has had a significant influence on postcolonial studies, critical theory, and revolutionary thought. His ideas about race, identity, and the psychological impact of oppression continue to be relevant in discussions about social justice and political theory. He argued that colonialism created a

system of oppression that dehumanized the colonized and resulted in a deeply ingrained sense of inferiority. This sense of inferiority, Fanon argued, could only be overcome through a process of decolonization that would lead to the creation of a new, liberated identity for the colonized. Fanon exerted a huge influence on the revolutionary leader of many countries including the USA, Cuba and South Africa.

- **Ngugi wa Thiong'o (b. 1938)**:

Ngugi wa Thiong'o is a Kenyan writer and literary theorist who has made significant contributions to postcolonial literature and the study of postcolonialism. He was born in Kamiriithu, Kenya, and his early works were written in English, but later he began writing in Gikuyu, his native language. Ngũgĩ is known for his criticism of colonialism and his advocacy for writing in indigenous languages. His works explore themes of resistance, identity, and the effects of colonialism on Kenyan society. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's work is rich with post-colonial themes and critiques. He explores the lasting impacts of colonialism on Kenyan society, especially how neo-colonialism perpetuates economic and cultural domination. His novels like "A Grain of Wheat" (1967) and "Petals of Blood" (1977) reflect these themes. He advocates for writing in African languages to reclaim cultural identity and resist colonial linguistic dominance. His shift from English to Gikuyu in his later works, such as "Decolonising the Mind" (1986), underscores this commitment. His works often focus on the struggle for independence and the complexities of post-independence politics. "A Grain of Wheat" examines the sacrifices and betrayals during Kenya's struggle for freedom.

Ngũgĩ highlights the social injustices perpetuated by both colonial and post-colonial regimes, focusing on issues like corruption, inequality, and exploitation. He emphasizes the importance of reclaiming and celebrating indigenous cultures and traditions that colonialism sought to undermine. His writing is a powerful exploration of the post-colonial struggle for identity, justice, and cultural integrity. His literary works are known for their exploration of African identity, cultural imperialism, and the impact of colonialism on the African continent. His most significant contribution to postcolonialism is his theory of "decolonizing the mind" as discussed in his book, *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*, where he argues that language is a tool of power and that the dominance of European languages in African literature perpetuates colonialism. He calls for African writers to reject European languages and use their native languages as a means of reclaiming their cultural identity and challenging the legacy of colonialism.

- **Chinua Achebe (1930-2013)**

Chinua Achebe was a Nigerian novelist, poet, and critic, born in the town of Ogidi, who is widely regarded as one of the most important figures in postcolonial literature. Achebe's contribution to postcolonialism lies in his critique of the way Western colonial powers portrayed Africa and Africans in literature. Achebe is renowned for his portrayal of pre-colonial African societies and the disruptions caused by British colonialism. His novel *Things Fall Apart* is a seminal work that challenges colonial narratives. It is a foundational pillar in post-colonial literature, and his writing vividly explores various post-colonial themes. Achebe's novels, especially "Things Fall Apart" (1958), critique the impact of British colonialism on African societies. He illustrates how colonial rule disrupted traditional Igbo culture and governance, leading to social fragmentation and cultural disintegration. His writing challenges the stereotypical portrayals of Africans found in colonial literature. He debunks the colonizers propaganda that they had come to civilize. By presenting rich, complex African societies with their own histories, cultures, and values, he reclaims and affirms African identity and heritage.

Achebe explores the clash between traditional African values and Western influences brought by colonizers. This cultural conflict is central in novels like "Things Fall Apart" and "No Longer at Ease" (1960). Achebe also examines how colonialism leads to cultural hybridity, where elements of

both cultures intermingle, sometimes leading to identity crises for individuals. He often writes in English, the language of the colonizers, but he infuses it with African rhythms, proverbs, and linguistic patterns. This approach challenges the dominance of colonial languages and asserts the validity of African voices within a global context. He also addresses the continuing effects of colonialism in the form of neo-colonialism, where former colonies continue to be economically and politically dominated by former colonizers or other global powers. This theme is evident in his later works and essays. His nuanced portrayal of these elements helps readers understand the complex legacies of colonialism and the ongoing struggles for cultural and personal identity in post-colonial societies. His major works are: *Things Fall Apart* (1958), *No Longer at Ease* (1960), and *Arrow of God* (1964).

- **Aimé Césaire (1913–2008)**

Aimé Césaire was a Martinican poet, playwright, and politician, and he is a central figure in the literary and political movement known as Negritude. Negritude was a cultural and intellectual movement founded by Césaire, Léopold Sédar Senghor, and Léon Damas, which sought to reclaim African cultural identity and heritage in response to colonialism and racism. His most famous work is *"Cahier d'un retour au pays natal"* ("Notebook of a Return to the Native Land"), a groundbreaking epic poem that combines personal reflection with political and social critique. In this work, Césaire explores themes of alienation, identity, and the struggle against colonial oppression, using rich, evocative language and a blend of traditional and modernist forms.

In addition to his literary contributions, Césaire was deeply involved in politics. He served as the mayor of Fort-de-France, Martinique, and was a member of the French National Assembly. His political work was marked by a commitment to anti-colonialism, social justice, and the promotion of Martinican and Caribbean cultural identity. His political activism and intellectual work were instrumental in the development of decolonization movements in Africa and the Caribbean. He was one of the founders of the Martinique Independentist Party, which advocated for Martinique's independence from France. Césaire's ideas heavily influenced other important postcolonial thinkers such as Frantz Fanon and Edward Said.

13.2.2 Australian Postcolonialism

Australian postcolonialism refers to the study and understanding of Australia's history, culture, and identity in the context of its colonial past and its aftermath. This field examines how the legacies of British colonization have shaped contemporary Australian society, politics, and cultural expressions. Australia was colonized by the British beginning in 1788, with the establishment of the First Fleet at Botany Bay. The impact of this colonization on Indigenous Australians has been profound, leading to significant cultural, social, and economic disruptions.

Australian postcolonial studies often focus on the formation of national identity. This includes how Australia has navigated its colonial past while developing a distinct cultural and national identity, often through literature, art, and popular culture. Australian literature and media have been important in postcolonial discourse, providing narratives that challenge colonial representations and offer alternative viewpoints. The rise of postcolonial theory in the 1980s and 1990s provided a framework for analysing and critiquing the legacies of colonialism in Australia Today, Australian postcolonialism continues to be an important area of academic inquiry and political activism. It plays a vital role in challenging dominant narratives, promoting Indigenous voices and perspectives, and advocating for greater recognition and respect for Indigenous rights and sovereignty. Given below are brief accounts of the most influential postcolonial writers from Australia.

- **Patrick White (1912-1990)**

Patrick White is a significant figure in Australian literature and his works are often examined

through a postcolonial lens. As one of Australia's most acclaimed novelists, White's writing provides a rich field for postcolonial analysis, particularly in how it addresses themes of identity, culture, and the impacts of colonialism. He is one of the most important figures in Australian literature and his contribution to Australian postcolonialism is significant. White's fiction draws its energy from the perspective of marginality. He was the first Australian writer to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1973, and his novels are known for their exploration of the complexities of Australian identity and the legacy of colonialism. White's novels like Voss offer a critique of colonial and postcolonial expectations. White's novels are also notable for their use of language and their experimental narrative techniques. His prose is often highly poetic, and he frequently employs stream-of-consciousness narration and other modernist techniques to explore the inner lives of his characters. White's contribution to Australian postcolonialism is significant because his novels explore the legacy of colonialism and its impact on Australian society and culture. His works continue to be studied and celebrated today as important contributions to the on-going project of understanding and grappling with Australia's colonial past.

- **Peter Carey (b. 1943)**

Peter Carey, an acclaimed Australian author, provides rich material for postcolonial analysis through his works, which often explore themes of identity, history, and cultural conflict. His novels are known for their inventive storytelling and critical engagement with Australia's colonial past and its impact on contemporary society. He has also made significant contributions to Australian postcolonialism through his literary works. His novels often explore themes related to Australian identity, history, and culture, particularly in the context of postcolonialism. His early works, such as Bliss (1981) and Illywhacker (1985), portray Australia as a country struggling to define itself in the aftermath of colonization. His writing is marked by a distinctive style that combines humour, satire, and a deep understanding of the complexities of the human psyche. In his novel *The True History of the Kelly Gang (2000)*, Carey tells the story of the infamous Australian outlaw Ned Kelly from Kelly's own perspective, portraying him as a product of the injustices and inequalities faced by the Irish and Indigenous communities in colonial Australia. He has helped to shape the conversation around Australian identity and history, challenging readers to confront the complexities and contradictions. Carey's works contribute to the broader discourse on postcolonialism in Australia by challenging and reimagining national myths and historical narratives. His critical engagement with Australia's colonial past and its present-day implications encourages readers to reconsider established perceptions of history, identity, and culture.

In short, Peter Carey's novels offer a nuanced exploration of postcolonial themes, engaging with issues of identity, history, and cultural representation. His innovative storytelling and critical perspectives make his work a significant part of the postcolonial literary canon in Australia.

- **Bill Ashcroft (b. 1946)**

Bill Ashcroft is a key figure in postcolonial literary studies, and his work has significantly shaped the field. Alongside Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, Ashcroft is a co-author of the influential "*The Empire Writes Back"* (1989), a foundational text in postcolonial theory. His contributions to the postcolonial literary canon focus on understanding how literature from former colonies interacts with colonial and postcolonial discourses. His contribution to Australian postcolonialism lies in his analysis of the ways in which colonial and postcolonial power structures have influenced Australian literature, culture, and identity. He has argued that Australian literature, which was once viewed as derivative of British literature, should be recognized as an independent and distinct body of work that reflects the unique experiences of Australian people. He differentiates between colonial and postcolonial on primarily a temporal basis, which has later repercussions in the socio-political environment of the erstwhile colonies. The colonial period, which indicates the time before independence, is wrought with

nationalistic writing and postcolonial studies cover all cultures affected by colonial hegemony.

Ashcroft's contributions have been widely recognized, though not without critique. Some scholars argue that his focus on literature might overlook other important aspects of postcolonial experience, such as economics and politics. Nonetheless, his work remains foundational in understanding the literary dimensions of postcolonial studies. In short, Bill Ashcroft's work has been instrumental in defining and expanding the postcolonial literary canon. His analysis of how literature engages with the legacies of colonialism provides valuable insights into the ways that postcolonial societies navigate their histories and construct new identities. His contributions continue to influence both literary criticism and broader cultural studies.

13.2.3 Caribbean Post Colonialism

Caribbean post-colonialism is a complex and multifaceted topic. It encompasses the social, political, and cultural changes that have occurred in the Caribbean region following the end of colonial rule. The Caribbean was colonized by various European powers, including Spain, Britain, France, and the Netherlands. The legacy of colonialism includes economic exploitation, racial hierarchies, and cultural imposition. Many Caribbean nations gained independence from colonial powers in the mid-20th century. Key milestones include the independence of Jamaica (1962), Trinidad and Tobago (1962), Barbados (1966), and many others.

Caribbean Post colonialism refers to the intellectual and cultural movement that emerged in the Caribbean region after the end of colonial rule in the mid-20th century. This movement sought to address the legacy of colonialism in the Caribbean and to develop new cultural and political identities that reflected the region's unique history and culture. The Caribbean region has a long and complex history of colonization, beginning with the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1492 and continuing with the Spanish, French, Dutch, and British colonial powers. The legacy of this history has had a profound impact on the region, shaping its political, economic, and social structures. In the early 20th century, there was a growing sense of political and cultural nationalism in the Caribbean, as people began to demand greater autonomy and self- determination. This led to the emergence of a number of influential political and cultural figures, including Marcus Garvey, C.L.R. James, and Frantz Fanon**.**

In the 1940s and 1950s, a new generation of Caribbean intellectuals began to emerge, who were deeply influenced by Marxist and anti-colonialist ideas. This group, which included. figures such as George Lamming, Derek Walcott, and V.S. Naipaul, sought to develop a new Caribbean identity that was rooted in the region's history and culture. In Short, Caribbean postcolonialism has had a profound impact on the region's intellectual and cultural life, as well as on its political and social structures. It has helped to foster a new sense of identity and belonging among Caribbean peoples, while also raising awareness of the on-going legacy of colonialism and the need for greater social justice and equality. Given below are brief accounts of two of the most influential postcolonial writers from the Caribbean islands. Caribbean post-colonialism is characterized by a dynamic interplay of historical legacies and contemporary realities. The region's efforts to reclaim and redefine its identity, address socio-economic challenges, and build resilient, inclusive societies reflect its ongoing journey through the post-colonial era.

- **V. S. Naipaul (1932-2018)**

Sir Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul was a Trinidadian-British writer. He is a significant figure in post-colonial literature. His works often grapple with themes related to colonialism, identity, and the complexities of post-colonial societies. His early writing was heavily influenced by his experience of growing up in Trinidad and his subsequent Naipaul's novels are known for their insightful exploration of the effect of colonialism on culture, society, and politics. He explores identity, particularly in the Caribbean. His writing often focuses on the experience of individuals and the tension between the

traditional values of the past and the modem realities of the present

One of Naipaul's most notable works is *A House for Mr. Biswas,* a novel that draws heavily on his own experiences of growing up in Trinidad. The novel explores themes of identity, belonging, and the struggle to reconcile traditional values with the modern world. Another important work by Naipaul is *The Mimic Men,* a novel that explores the experiences of a Trinidadian man who has migrated to England. The novel explores the themes of cultural displacement, identity, and the search for belonging in a foreign land. Naipaul's writing has been both celebrated and criticized for its unflinching portrayal of the complexities of postcolonial identity. His work has helped to shed light on the complexities of postcolonial identity and the challenges faced by those who must navigate the tensions between tradition and modernity in a rapidly changing world. V.S. Naipaul's work provides a complex and often critical view of post-colonial societies. His exploration of identity, cultural displacement, and socio-political issues offers valuable insights into the post-colonial condition. However, his critical approach and perspective have sparked debates, reflecting the broader challenges and controversies within post-colonial literature.

- **Derek Walcott (1930-2017)**

Derek Walcott, a renowned Saint Lucian poet and playwright, is a central figure in post-colonial literature. His work is celebrated for its exploration of Caribbean identity, history, and the effects of colonialism. His work explores the complexities of Caribbean identity in the wake of colonialism. He addresses the challenges of reconciling African heritage with European influences in a post-colonial context. His writing frequently reflects the hybrid nature of Caribbean culture, blending elements from African, European, and indigenous traditions. This synthesis is evident in his use of Caribbean idioms and imagery alongside classical literary forms. His poetry frequently featured vivid descriptions of the natural world and landscapes of the Caribbean, as well as historical and mythological allusions drawn from both European and African cultures.

One of Walcott's most influential works is his epic poem Omeros (1990), which is loosely based on Homer's lliad and Odyssey and explores the history and culture of the Caribbean through a narrative that spans centuries and continents. The poem also features a diverse range of characters, including fishermen, plantation workers, and descendants of both European and African colonizers. Walcott's other notable works include the poetry collections In a Green Night (1962), The Gulf and Other Poems (1969), and White Egrets (2010). He also wrote several plays, including Dream on Monkey Mountain (1970), which explores the themes of identity and cultural memory through the story of a Caribbean man's quest for self-discovery.

Derek Walcott's work is a cornerstone of post-colonial literature, offering profound insights into Caribbean identity, history, and culture. Through his poetry and drama, Walcott explores the legacies of colonialism and the ongoing process of cultural and personal reconstruction in the Caribbean. His innovative use of language and literary forms, coupled with his deep engagement with Caribbean history and landscape, has cemented his place as a significant figure in post-colonial literary studies. He became a major voice for Caribbean literature and helped to establish it as a significant field of study within the broader context of world literature.

13.2.4 Indian Post colonialism

Indian post-colonialism encompasses the complex social, political, and cultural changes that have occurred in India since it gained independence from British rule in 1947. This period has seen a wide range of transformations as the country navigates its identity and development in the post-colonial era. This movement sought to reclaim India's cultural and political identity, which had been suppressed during centuries of colonialism. The history of Indian postcolonialism can be traced back to the carly 20th century when a group of Indian intellectuals, including Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi,

and Jawaharlal Nehru, began to critique British colonialism and promote Indian nationalism. They sought to create a new, independent India that would be free from the shackles of colonialism and would promote social justice and economic development.

The history of postcolonialism in India is tied very closely with the history of the Bengal Renaissance in the late 19th and early 20th century.

Although before Independence, the postcolonial ideology could easily be gauged in the writings of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, and Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, and others. Several writers as R.K. Narayan, Mulkraj Anand, Raja Rao, Salman Rushdie, and women like Shashi Deshpande, Arundhati Roy, etc. explored the complex issues ofidentity, culture, and politics that emerged in postcolonial India. These writers questioned the traditional power structures of Indian society and challenged the dominant narratives of Indian history. In short, Indian post-colonialism is characterized by a dynamic interplay of historical legacies and contemporary challenges. The country's journey since independence involves navigating issues of identity, governance, and socio-economic development while addressing the enduring impact of colonial rule. The rich and diverse contributions of Indian literature, politics, and culture reflect the complexities of this post-colonial experience.

- **Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)**

Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) was a seminal figure in Indian literature and thought, whose works span a range of genres including poetry, drama, and prose. Although his writing predates the formal establishment of the post-colonial discourse, his work is deeply relevant to post-colonial studies. Tagore's exploration of identity, culture, and colonialism provides valuable insights into the complexities of post-colonial life in India. Tagore lived and wrote during British colonial rule in India, a period marked by significant socio-political and cultural upheaval. His work reflects both a critique of colonialism and an exploration of Indian cultural identity. He was the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913 for his collection of poems Gitanjali. Tagore's literary works addressed the social and political issues of his time, including Indian nationalism, cultural identity, and the impact of British colonialism. He emphasized the importance of preserving India's rich cultural heritage while embracing modernity and progress. His most notable works include Gitanjali, a collection of poems that explores the themes of spirituality, love, and nature; his novel The Home and the World addresses the challenges of Indian nationalism and the clash between tradition and modernity, while his play *The Post Office* deals with the themes of death and the human desire for freedom. These are but minute instances from the huge wealth of literature that Tagore has offered in his lifetime. Tagore delivered a series of lectures from 1914 to 1917 which were published together in the form of the essay Nationalism (1917). His contributions to literature and thought provide a rich context for understanding the complexities of post-colonial identity and cultural dynamics. His critiques of colonialism, coupled with his exploration of Indian cultural and spiritual traditions, offer valuable insights into the broader post-colonial discourse. His work remains a vital part of discussions about how societies navigate the legacies of colonialism while striving to assert their cultural and philosophical identities.

- **Raja Rao (1908-2006)**

Raja Rao (1908–2006) was a significant Indian writer whose work addresses themes central to post-colonial literature. His novels and essays offer profound insights into the impact of colonialism on Indian society, culture, and identity. His works, which are known for their philosophical depth and poetic language, explore themes of identity, culture, and spirituality, and offer a critique of colonialism and its impact on Indian society. Rao's most famous work is the novel The Serpent and the Rope (1960), which explores the tension between Eastern and Western culture through the story of a young

Indian intellectual studying in France. The novel draws on Indian mythology and philosophy to reflect on the complexities of identity and the struggle to reconcile one's cultural heritage with modernity. Another important work by Rao is Kanthapura (1938), a novel that depicts the struggle of an Indian village against British colonial rule. Through the eyes of a young girl, the novel portrays the power dynamics and social inequalities that existed in colonial India, and the role of the Indian independence movement in challenging these structures.

Raja Rao's contributions to post-colonial literature are marked by his exploration of the complexities of identity, culture, and spirituality in the context of colonial and post-colonial India. His works provide valuable insights into the impact of colonialism on Indian society and the ongoing search for cultural and personal identity. Through his innovative use of language and narrative, Rao has made a lasting impact on Indian literature and post-colonial studies. His contribution to Indian postcolonialism lies in his ability to blend Western literary techniques with Indian philosophy and mythology, and to create a new language of expression that was uniquely Indian.

13.2.4 Postcolonial Theory

Literary theory encompasses a broad range of approaches and methodologies for analyzing and interpreting literature. It involves the study of different perspectives and frameworks that help scholars understand the meaning, form, and function of literary texts. The era of criticism, in turn, gave room to the era of theory in the latter part of second half of the twentieth century. Theory is of continental origin. Its philosophy is rooted in existentialism. The term 'theory' should remind us that its primary concern is not with the interpretation of specific works, but with human discourse in general. Theory involves a questioning of some of the basic hypothetical assumptions we make in our study of literature. What is an author? What is meant by 'meaning of a text? What happens when we read? How should we read a text and why? What is the difference between a work and a 'text'? The 1980s were the high watermark of theory. It started off as a rejection of and reaction to the traditional modes of understanding literature.

Postcolonial theory is an intellectual framework used to analyze, critique, and understand the cultural, political, and social impacts of colonialism and imperialism. It emerged in the mid-20th century as a response to the legacies of colonial rule and seeks to address the ways in which colonial histories continue to shape contemporary societies. It seeks to challenge the Eurocentric and imperialistic perspectives that have dominated academic discourse and mainstream culture. It highlights the experiences, perspectives, and voices of colonized peoples and explores the ways in which colonialism has impacted their identities, cultures, and histories. It also critiques the power structures and ideologies that perpetuate colonialism and imperialism, such as racism, Orientalism, and neocolonialism. Postcolonial theory analyses both the literature written by colonizer people and that written by the colonizers about the colonized people.

Postcolonial theory has influenced various academic disciplines, such as literature, history, anthropology, sociology, political science, and cultural studies. It has also inspired social movements and political activism around the world, as it advocates for the decolonization of knowledge and institutions and the recognition of the diversity and complexity of human experiences and cultures. It provides essential tools for understanding the enduring effects of colonialism and imperialism. By examining how power, culture, and identity have been shaped by colonial histories, postcolonial theory helps to uncover the complexities of contemporary global relationships and cultural interactions. It continues to influence various fields, including literature, history, cultural studies, and politics, offering insights into the ongoing impact of colonial legacies and the struggles for cultural and political autonomy. Given below are brief accounts of the most important figures in the establishment of postcolonial theory as a discipline that is taught across the world.

- **Edward Said (1935-2003)**

Edward Said (1935–2003) was a pivotal figure in the development of postcolonial theory, primarily through his groundbreaking work, *"Orientalism"* (1978). His analysis has profoundly influenced how scholars and critics approach the study of colonialism, imperialism, and cultural representation. In this book, Said argued that Western representations of the "Orient" were constructed through a process of power and domination, which he called "Orientalism." According to Said, the West (or the Occident) created a false and essentialized image of the Orient as exotic, mysterious, and inferior in order to justify their colonial project. Said argues that the representation of the "Orient" was not just a matter of academic knowledge, but it had political and cultural implications as well. Postcolonial theorists have built on Said's work to examine the ways in which colonialism continues to shape the cultural, economic, and political relations between the West and the non-Western world. Edward Said focused on the exploring and questioning the artificial boundaries of "us – others" mentality which many colonizers took with them to new country.

He argued for the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and criticized Western support for Israel's occupation of Palestine. Overall, Edward Said's contributions to postcolonial theory have been essential in helping scholars and activists understand the legacies of colonialism and imperialism in the modern world. His work has influenced scholars in fields ranging from literary criticism to anthropology and political science, and continues to be relevant today. Edward Said's contributions to postcolonial theory, particularly through his concept of Orientalism, have profoundly shaped how scholars understand the relationships between knowledge, culture, and power. His work continues to influence discussions on colonial legacies, cultural representation, and identity, making him a central figure in postcolonial studies and related fields. Thus this foundational view on post colonialism, Edward Said called the father of postcolonialism.

- **Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (b. 1942)**

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (born 1942) is a prominent scholar in postcolonial theory known for her influential contributions to understanding the complexities of colonialism, gender, and representation. Her work critically examines how colonial and imperial histories shape contemporary issues of identity, power, and voice. She is known for her contributions to the study of colonialism, imperialism, gender, and language. Her work has focused on the ways in which Western discourses of power have constructed the "other" and perpetuated oppressive structures in the postcolonial world. One of Spivak's most famous works is "*Can the Subaltern Speak?*" published in 1988, where she argues that the voices of subaltern groups, such as colonized people, are silenced by dominant discourse and cannot be fully represented or understood within existing Western frameworks. She posits that even attempts to give voice to subaltern groups can become further forms of domination and colonization, and therefore, scholars need to approach the task of representation with great care and sensitivity. Spivak attacks the Eurocentric attitudes and investigates the double colonization of women (Dalit/ Black women), who are marginalized of the subaltern.

Spivak has also written extensively on the relationship between language and power, arguing that language is used as a tool of domination and that Western discourse has constructed the "other" as inferior and in need of Western intervention. In her book *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present (1999)*, she explores the ways in which language and culture have been appropriated and distorted by Western colonial powers, and how this has led to the erasure of other cultures and ways of knowing. Another notable contribution of Spivak is her emphasis on the intersectionality of gender, race, and class. In her essay *"Feminism and Critical Theory" (1986)*, she critiques the universalizing tendencies of Western feminism, arguing that feminist theory must be contextualized within the specific historical and cultural experiences of women in different parts of the world. In short, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's contributions to postcolonial theory have

significantly advanced our understanding of the intersections between colonialism, power, and representation. Her work challenges dominant narratives and advocates for the inclusion of marginalized voices in scholarly and cultural discourses. Through her critical examination of how knowledge is produced and how the subaltern is represented, Spivak has provided essential insights into the ongoing impacts of colonialism and the complexities of postcolonial identity.

- **Homi K. Bhabha (b. 1949)**

Homi K. Bhabha is a key figure in postcolonial theory known for his innovative contributions to understanding the complexities of cultural identity, power, and colonialism. His work challenges traditional notions of identity and cultural representation and provides new ways of thinking about the legacies of colonialism. His work has been influential in challenging traditional notions of identity, power, and representation in postcolonial societies. His most notable contribution to postcolonial theory is his concept of "hybridity," which refers to the blending of cultures and identities that occurs as a result of colonization. In his seminal book, The Location of Culture (1994), Bhabha argues that hybridity is a key element of postcolonial identity and that it represents a form of resistance to colonialism. According to Bhabha, hybridity creates a "third space" between the colonizer and the colonized that enables the emergence of new forms of cultural expression and political subjectivity. He feel that postcolonial people and experiences are composed of mixed elements. Bhabha felt that cultures are more than “us and others”: they are sum of their history.

Another important concept in Bhabha's work is "mimicry," which he discusses in his essay "*Of Mimicry and Man" (1984*) Bhabha argues that mimicry is a form of subversive imitation that challenges the authority of the colonizer. Through mimicry, the colonized subject can appropriate the language and symbols of the colonizer and use them to undermine colonial power structures. In his essay "*Signs Taken for Wonders" (1985*), Bhabha discusses the ways in which colonial discourse has shaped the representation of the "other" in literature. He argues that postcolonial writers can use language and narrative strategies to challenge and subvert colonial representations of their cultures. In short, Homi K. Bhabha’s contributions to postcolonial theory have provided critical insights into the complexities of colonial and postcolonial identities. His concepts of hybridity, the Third Space, and mimicry offer valuable tools for understanding how colonial legacies shape cultural interactions and power dynamics. Bhabha’s work challenges traditional notions of identity and representation, highlighting the fluid, dynamic nature of cultural processes in a postcolonial world. His theoretical innovations continue to influence contemporary debates in postcolonial studies and cultural analysis.

- **Walter D. Mignolo (b. 1941)**

Walter D. Mignolo is a significant figure in postcolonial theory known for his work on decolonial thinking and the critique of Western epistemology. His contributions emphasize the need to rethink knowledge production and cultural narratives from the perspective of historically marginalized and colonized peoples. Mignolo’s work extends postcolonial theory into the realm of decoloniality, focusing on how knowledge, power, and culture intersect in the context of colonial and postcolonial histories. His work challenges the Eurocentric perspective of modernity and emphasizes the importance of diverse epistemologies: and worldviews in the production of knowledge. In his book The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures. Decolonial Options (2011), Mignolo argues that Western modernity has been built on the foundation of colonialism, which has led to the marginalization of non- Western cultures and knowledge systems. He suggests that decolonization should not only be a political process but also an epistemic one that challenges the universalist claims of Western knowledge.

Mignolo's concept of "border thinking" is central to his work on decolonial theory. Border thinking refers to the ability to think outside of the dominant Western epistemological framework and

to recognize the existence of multiple epistemologies and worldviews. In his book Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking (2000), Mignolo explains how border thinking can help to deconstruct colonial structures of knowledge production and promote alternative forms of knowledge. Mignolo has also written extensively on the role of language in colonialism and the decolonization process. In The Idea of Latin America (2005), he argues that the concept of Latin America was created as a linguistic and cultural construct by European colonizers and that it continues to be used to perpetuate colonial power relations He suggests that the decolonization of language is essential to achieving true decolonization. In short, Walter D. Mignolo's contributions to postcolonial and decolonial theory have provided crucial insights into the intersections of knowledge, power, and culture in the context of colonial legacies. His concepts of decoloniality, coloniality of power, border thinking, and epistemic decolonization challenge dominant Western narratives and advocate for a more inclusive and pluralistic approach to understanding global issues. Mignolo's work continues to influence contemporary debates in postcolonial studies, cultural studies, and beyond, offering valuable perspectives on how to address and move beyond the legacies of colonialism.

13.3 POST COLONIALISM: SOCIO-POLITICAL, CULTURAL AND LITERARY APPROACH

Post-Colonial Literature comes from Britain's former colonies in the Caribbean, Africa and India. The post-colonial period is the period after the decolonization of the colonies. Many post-colonial writers write in English and focus on common themes such as the struggle for independence, emigration, national identity, allegiance and childhood. Post colonialism or postcolonial studies is a specifically postmodern intellectual discourse that consists of reactions to the cultural legacy of colonialism and imperialism. Postcolonialism is defined in anthropology as the relations between European nations and areas they colonized and once ruled. Postcolonialism comprises a set of theories found amongst history, anthropology, philosophy, linguistics, film, political science, architecture, human geography, sociology, Marxist theory, feminism, religious and theological studies, and literature. The ultimate goal of post-colonialism is accounting for and combating the residual effects of colonialism on cultures. Post-colonialist thinkers recognize that many of the assumptions which underlie the "logic" of colonialism are still active forces today.

Post-colonial literature is a field of literary study that focuses on works produced in response to the legacies of colonialism and imperialism. It examines the ways in which colonial powers have influenced and shaped the cultures, identities, and literatures of colonized regions. This genre often explores themes of identity, displacement, resistance, and the aftermath of colonial rule. Post-colonial literature includes individuals and groups from formerly colonized regions and asserts their identities and narratives, often in opposition to the stereotypes and representations imposed by colonial powers.

The field also engages with a variety of theoretical frameworks, including post-colonial theory itself, which was heavily influenced by scholars like Edward Said, whose work Orientalism critiques how Western literature and scholarship have represented Eastern societies. In short, post-colonial literature provides valuable insights into the effects of colonialism and the ongoing struggles for cultural and political autonomy.

13.3.1 Post Colonialism: Socio-Political Approach

Post-colonialism, as a framework for understanding literature and society, delves into various socio-political and cultural dimensions that arise from the legacy of colonial rule. Post-colonial analysis often examines how colonial powers established and maintained control through political institutions and governance structures, and how these structures persisted or evolved after independence. It highlights the challenges faced by newly independent nations in establishing stable

governments and creating national identities distinct from their colonial pasts. It studies the resistance movements and uprisings against colonial rule, including both armed struggles and non-violent protests and the continuation of resistance in response to new forms of oppression, whether from domestic leaders or global forces. Postcolonial literature examines how colonial legal systems have influenced post-colonial legal reforms and justice systems and colonial legacies have affected social structures, including gender roles, education systems, and class dynamics.

13.3.2 Post Colonialism: Cultural Approach

Post-colonial literature and studies frequently address issues of identity formation and cultural expression in post-colonial societies, often in reaction to colonial representations. It studies colonial and post-colonial societies and their representation in literature, film, and media. It also studies the emergence of new forms of language and cultural expression that blend colonial, indigenous elements and indigenous cultural practices, resulting in unique cultural forms and traditions that reflect both influences. The use of traditional cultural forms resists colonial and post-colonial domination. The artists and writers from post-colonial societies use literature, art, and performance to explore and express their experiences, histories, and identities. The historical narratives from colonial perspectives provide alternative viewpoints and challenging dominant historical accounts. It highlights the exploration of the experiences of people who have migrated from former colonies to other parts of the world and how they maintain or negotiate their cultural identities. In short, post-colonial studies is an interdisciplinary field that draws on history, politics, sociology, literature, and cultural studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of how colonial legacies continue to shape societies around the world. It aims to address and critique the power imbalances and cultural impacts that persist long after formal colonial rule has ended.

13.3.3 Post Colonialism: Literary Approach

The literary approach to post-colonialism involves analyzing and interpreting literary texts through the lens of post-colonial theory. This approach seeks to understand how colonial histories, power dynamics, and cultural encounters are reflected and critiqued in literature. Post-colonial literature often critiques and deconstructs stereotypical representations of colonized peoples and cultures that were perpetuated by colonial powers. Many post-colonial texts aim to rewrite or challenge dominant historical narratives imposed by colonial powers, providing alternative perspectives and voices that were previously marginalized. A central concept in post-colonial literature is hybridity, which refers to the blending of different cultural elements resulting from colonial encounters. Literary texts explore how characters navigate, negotiate, and assert their identities in a hybrid cultural space. Post-colonial literature often portrays the complexities of identity formation in the wake of colonialism, addressing issues such as displacement, cultural fragmentation, and the search for self-definition. On one side, these literary works examine the impact of colonial power structures on individuals and societies, exploring themes of domination, exploitation, and resistance and on the other side it depicts acts of resistance against colonial oppression, highlighting the agency of colonized people in challenging and subverting colonial rule. Post-colonial literature often addresses the negotiation between traditional cultural practices and colonial influences, exploring how these interactions shape contemporary cultural expressions.

Many post-colonial literary works explore themes of migration, exile, and diaspora, focusing on the experiences of individuals who have been displaced due to colonial or post-colonial conditions. It explores the experiences of diaspora communities and their efforts to maintain cultural connections while adapting to new environments, colonialism intersected with gender dynamics, addressing issues such as the representation of women and the impact of colonial rule on gender relations, an intersectional analysis of race, class, gender, and other social factors to understand how they influence and shape post-colonial experiences and narratives. In short, the literary approach to post-colonialism

provides a critical framework for analyzing how literature reflects, critiques, and engages with the legacies of colonialism, exploring the complexities of identity, power, and cultural exchange in post-colonial contexts.

13.4 CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS OF POST COLONIAL LITERATURE

Post-colonialism, as both a theoretical framework and a field of study, examines the impacts of colonialism and the responses of formerly colonized societies. These are some of the chief characteristics of post-colonial literature.

13.4.1 Critique of Colonial Power and Representation

Post-colonialism involves deconstructing the dominant narratives created by colonial powers that often misrepresented or marginalized colonized people and cultures. It critiques stereotypical and exoticized representations of colonized societies found in colonial literature and scholarship.

13.4.2 Focus on Identity and Cultural Hybridity

This concept, notably discussed by Homi K. Bhabha, refers to the cultural mixing and blending that results from colonial encounters, leading to new, hybrid identities and cultural forms. Post-colonialism examines how individuals and societies negotiate and reconstruct their identities in response to both colonial influences and the post-colonial experience.

13.4.3 Examination of Power Dynamics and Resistance

It explores how colonial powers established and maintained control, and how these power dynamics continue to affect post-colonial societies. The field focuses on acts of resistance against colonial domination and the agency of colonized people in challenging and subverting colonial rule.

13.4.4 Impact of Colonial Legacies

Post-colonialism analyzes the economic impacts of colonial exploitation, including the ongoing economic inequalities and dependencies that result from colonial rule. It examines how colonial administrative systems, legal frameworks, and social hierarchies have persisted or been transformed after independence.

13.4.5 Language and Discourse

The role of language in colonial domination and its continued influence on post-colonial societies is a key concern. This includes the impact of colonial languages on indigenous languages and cultural expression. It involves analyzing how colonial and post-colonial discourses shape and reflect power relations, identities, and cultural narratives.

13.4.6 Cultural Revival and Continuity

Post-colonialism often involves efforts to revive and reclaim indigenous cultural practices, languages, and traditions that were suppressed or altered by colonialism. It also explores how post-colonial societies innovate and create new cultural forms that reflect their unique experiences and histories.

13.4.7 Diaspora and Migration

The field examines the experiences of individuals and communities who have migrated from former colonies, including issues of identity, displacement, and cultural adaptation. It considers how global migration and the spread of diasporic communities affect cultural practices and identities.

13.4.8 Gender and Intersectionality

Post-colonialism often explores how colonialism intersected with gender dynamics, examining

the impact on women and gender relations within post-colonial contexts. The approach incorporates intersectional analysis, considering how race, gender, class, and other social factors intersect to shape post-colonial experiences.

13.4.9 Literary and Artistic Expression

Post-colonial literature and art frequently reinterpret colonial themes and narratives, offering new perspectives and voices from previously marginalized groups. Artistic works often reflect the blending of colonial and indigenous influences, creating new forms of expression and cultural meaning

13.4. 10. Focus on Global and Local Contexts

Post-colonialism examines the global impact of colonialism, including how former colonial powers and their former colonies interact in the contemporary world. It also considers how the experiences and responses to colonialism vary across different local contexts, recognizing the diversity within post-colonial societies.

In short, post-colonialism is characterized by its critical examination of colonial legacies, its focus on identity and power, and its exploration of cultural and socio-political responses to colonial rule.

13.5 LET'S SUM UP

In this Unit we have discussed postcolonial theory and literature with the reference of some important writers and theorist of world literature that will be helpful to understand. We have given you:

- a detailed introduction to postcolonial literature.
- an idea to understand the origin and development of postcolonial theory and literature .
- an outline of chief characteristics of postcolonial literature .
- a detailed discussion on major writers of postcolonial theory and literature.
- a brief guideline on how to read a literary discipline.

13.6 QUESTIONS

Long Answer Type Questions

1. How does Edward Said discuss the postcolonial concept of Orientalism ?
2. What is Homi K. Bhabha’s concept of hybridity? What are the implications of hybridity for understanding cultural identity and power dynamics?
3. Walter D. Mignolo argues for the decolonization of knowledge. How does his concept of decoloniality challenge the dominance of Western epistemologies?
4. Discuss the significance and complexities of identity and knowledge in a postcolonial world?
5. How can the concept of the "coloniality of power" help us understand contemporary global inequalities and power structures that persist after formal decolonization?
6. How does the idea of strategic essentialism, as articulated by Spivak, offer a framework for marginalized groups to assert their political and cultural identities?
7. Discuss the impact of postcolonial theory on literary canon formation.
8. How have postcolonial critiques reshaped the way we understand and evaluate canonical texts from colonial and postcolonial contexts?

Short Answer Type Questions

1. **What is Orientalism according to Edward Said?**

   Orientalism is a framework by which Western scholars and artists have historically constructed and represented the East (or Orient) in a manner that serves Western interests, often perpetuating stereotypes and justifying colonial domination.

2. **What does Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak mean by "subaltern"?**

   The term "subaltern" refers to marginalized or oppressed groups whose voices and perspectives are often excluded from dominant historical and political narratives. The term has been taken from military jargon, where it means junior rank.

3. **How does Homi K. Bhabha define hybridity?**

   Hybridity is the creation of new cultural forms and identities that emerge from the interaction and mixing of the colonizer and colonized cultures, challenging binary distinctions and fixed identities.

4. **What is the "Third Space" in Bhabha's theory?**

   The Third Space is a conceptual space where hybrid cultural interactions occur, allowing for the negotiation and creation of new meanings and identities beyond traditional colonial binaries.

5. **What is the "coloniality of power" concept?**

   The coloniality of power refers to the enduring global power structures and hierarchies established during colonial times that continue to influence contemporary social, political, and economic relations.

6. **How does mimicry function in postcolonial theory?**

   Mimicry involves the colonized imitating the colonizer's culture in a way that both conforms to and subverts colonial authority, revealing contradictions and tensions in colonial power.

7. **What is strategic essentialism?**

   Strategic essentialism is a tactic used by marginalized groups to temporarily unite and present a unified identity for political or social purposes, despite recognizing that such identities are constructed and fluid.

8. **How does postcolonial theory critique universalism?**

   Postcolonial theory critiques universalism by challenging the notion that Western norms and values are universally applicable, advocating instead for the recognition of diverse, culturally specific perspectives.

9. **What is the central theme of Jean Rhys's *"Wide Sargasso Sea"*?**

   The central theme is the exploration of colonialism, racial and gender identity, and mental illness through the backstory of Antoinette Cosway, the "madwoman in the attic" from *"Jane Eyre"*.

10. **How does Chinua Achebe's *"Things Fall Apart"* challenge colonial narratives?**

    The novel challenges colonial narratives by presenting a nuanced portrayal of pre-colonial Igbo society and exposing the destructive impact of European colonization on African cultures.

11. **What is the significance of magical realism in Salman Rushdie's *"Midnight's Children"*?**

Magical realism in the novel is used to blend historical events with fantastical elements, reflecting the complexities of postcolonial identity and the tumultuous history of India.

12. **How does Derek Walcott's poetry address the legacy of colonialism?**

Derek Walcott's poetry often reflects on the Caribbean experience of colonialism, exploring themes of cultural identity, history, and the blending of African and European influences in the postcolonial Caribbean context.

13.7 FURTHER READINGS

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The Oxford Companion to English Literature, ed Margaret Drabble. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

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Unit-14 Namvar Singh: 'Decolonising the Indian Mind', Chapter IX & X

Structure

14.0 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit, we shall briefly discuss the postcolonial elements in the works of Namvar Singh. In addition to this, we shall also discuss the intellectual, social and political elements in his literary essay 'Decolonising the Indian Mind'. The essay gave a vision of postcolonial rule. After reading this Unit carefully, you will be able to:

- Understand the main trends in postcolonial literature;
- Describe the social and political reason in its development;
- Discuss the historical background of postcolonial literature.
- Discuss Namvar Singh's thoughts about the colonial rule and its impact after decolonization.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, we have discussed chief characteristics of postcolonial literature. In this unit, we are going to learn postcolonial literature and thoughts of Namvar Singh about it. His vision will help us in understanding the major concepts of it. Postcolonial literature refers to literary works produced in or about regions that were formerly colonized by European powers. This body of literature often explores the impacts of colonization on cultures, identities, and societies. Do go through all the sections and answer the questions given in 'Check Your Progress'. This will help you to remember what you have read and also give you some practice in expressing yourself in your own words. We do hope you enjoy working through this unit.

14.2 LIFE AND WORKS OF NAMVAR SINGH

Namvar Singh (1927–2007) was a prominent Indian scholar, literary critic, and professor known for his influential work in Hindi literature. His contributions span various aspects of literary theory, criticism, and the evolution of modern Hindi literature. He was born on July 28, 1927, in a village in the Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh, India. He completed his M.A. in Hindi from the University of Allahabad and later earned his Ph.D. His doctoral thesis focused on the modern Hindi novel, and he went on to develop a significant body of work in literary criticism.

He was a leading figure in literary criticism in India. His work often explored the social, cultural, and political dimensions of literature. He was instrumental in shaping the discourse around

modern Hindi literature and its various forms. His theories and critiques have had a lasting impact on the study and appreciation of Hindi literature. His insights into narrative techniques, thematic concerns, and literary forms have been widely respected and cited.

Namvar Singh had a long and distinguished teaching career. He served as a professor and later as the head of the Department of Hindi at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in New Delhi. He was associated with various literary and academic institutions, contributing to the development of literary studies in India. He received numerous awards and honours for his contributions to literature and criticism, including the Sahitya Akademi Award and other prestigious recognitions. Namvar Singh's work remains influential in the study of Hindi literature and literary criticism. His ability to blend theoretical insights with a deep understanding of literary texts has made him a key figure in Indian literary studies.

His important works are:

"Kavita ke Naye Prakaar" (New Forms of Poetry):

This book discusses the evolution and diversification of Hindi poetry.

"Hindi Sahitya Ka Itihas" (History of Hindi Literature):

A comprehensive study of the development of Hindi literature from ancient to modern times.

"Yatharth Aur Kalpana" (Reality and Imagination): An exploration of the interplay between reality and imagination in literature.

"Aadhunik Hindi Kavita" (Modern Hindi Poetry): Analyzes the trends and movements in modern Hindi poetry.

14.3 TEXT

The greatest event of world history in the twentieth century has been decolonisation. The century may not have yet ended but the hegemony in literature of Europe and America has certainly come to an end. At the centre of literary creation we have now not Europe and America but the nations of Latin America, Africa and Asia. It is from these countries that works which are creatively exciting and stimulating are coming out, and the initiative lies with the writers of these countries. Whereas the writers of Latin America and Africa are mounting a challenge to the literature of Europe and America in the very languages of Europe, it is mainly in our own non-European languages that the writers of an Asian country like India are hastening the process of decolonization.

While this process had started with the beginning of the century in Latin America, Africa and Asia, it was accelerated after the Second World War. In order to annex this new literary groundswell, the literary theorists of Europe and America have from time to time come up with various theoretical formulations, calling it now "Commonwealth Literature", now "New Literatures in English", and now "Post-colonial Literature." The newest such formulation is "Third World Literature." In one sense, the concept of "Third World Literature" may be seen as a new variation on Goethe's old concept of "World Literature", but it is not quite so innocent. It is in fact but a devious device to maintain the hegemony of "First World Literature," and if we look at it carefully, the formulation "Third World Literature" is nothing but neo- "orientalism" of the post-colonial age. Apparently, in order to define themselves, Europe and America still need some entity "other" than themselves. It is implicit in this Western conception that the Third World too must need some "other" in order to define itself, and who could this "other" be, of course, but the West! To my mind, this is the true perspective in which to evaluate Indian Literature of the twentieth century.

Whether the issue is that of tradition and modernity, or of regional and national identity, or the

aesthetic one of experimentalism and the assimilation of indigenous forms, it is hardly possible to look for a resolution except in the perspective of decolonization. Therefore, the very first question to ask is; how aware and active are the Indian writers today so far as the process of decolonization is concerned? Nor is this question one of mere academic interest, as is often the case in our seminars and conferences. The question relates directly to the release of our creative energy. And at this point, I humbly beg to submit that among Indian writers after Independence, the attitude of militant decolonization which was to be seen in the writers of an earlier generation has grown feeble and slack. This may be why we do not have among us a Gabriel Garcia Márquez, a Chinua Achebe or a Ngungi Wa Thiong'o. I often feel that within the so-called "Third World Literature" of today, Indian literature lags behind the literatures of Africa and Latin America, especially in the genres of the novel, the short story and drama. Needless to say, I make this statement not as any kind of self-rebuke or accusation but with a sense of profound anguish.

Could it possibly be that we have now lost the fervour of the days of our nationalist struggle? Today we have neither that nationalist sentiment nor that nationalism. Nationalism is not a panacea for all ills. It has its dangers too, and it is not as if I am rot alive to them. But history has not yet consigned nationalism to its dustbin as a spent force; indeed, if anything, there have been signs of its resurgence in the latter half of our country. Perhaps, so long as imperialism lives in one form or another, there will remain a need for nationalism. But isn't it the case that we have somewhere in the recesses of sensibility come to a silent compromise with imperialism? It is but rarely that one comes across the word 'imperialism' in intellectual circles now, as if the thing itself had ceased to be.

And does this not have something to do with our Independence of 1947? How many of us are aware that we did not gain Independence, but that we were granted it? Now who does not know the difference between being 'granted' something and 'gaining' it? Were it a matter of gaining independence, would we have gained the independence of a partitioned country? How is it that a country which had rejected the partition of Bengal in 1905 accepted the partition of the country in 1947, especially when the basis of the partition was the same; communalism? Over those four decades, such a great change came about that the very language for describing these two events changed. The very word Banga-bhanga evokes by assonance anga-bhanga, i.e., dismemberment, but what is the resonance by comparison of vibhajana, bantwara or taqseem? It is not true that the swadeshi movement which arose in opposition to the partition of Bengal saved the Indian identity from fragmentation, while our acquiescence in the partition of the country in 1947 served to shatter it to bits?

To see how far reaching are the consequence of such fragmentation, let us consider two Indian novels: the first Gora (1910) by Rabindranath Tagore, which has for its background Banga bhanga and the Swadeshi movement, and the other Samskara (1965) by U.R. Anantha Murthy, which has nothing to do at all with the partition of India. If these two novels are still comparable, it is because each has at its centre the theme of the search for identity and the crisis of identity. The hero of Gora tries for all he is worth to become a Hindu but is eventually obliged to become an Indian. The hero of Samskara, Praneshacharya, endeavours to act as a Brahmin priest but after his fall is left a common human being. Each experiences a sense of liberation, and each is shocked into such liberation. The shock for Gaur Mohan lies in the revelation that he is not by birth a Hindu. The shock for Praneshacharya comes through his physical contact with the untouchable girl Chandri. Through their respective baptisms by fire, each emerges a human being. But while the humanising of Gaur Mohan lies in his becoming an Indian, the humanising of Praneshacharya comes about through his defying the many taboos associated with his conduct as an acharya. Both the novels constitute an allegory—what one might even call, in Frederic Jameson's phrase, a "national allegory," which has been suggested to be a distinct characteristic of the so-called "Third World Novel".

But what a great difference there is on the question of "identity" between Gora and Samskara—and here the difference is of the essence! Gaur Mohan's last sentence is: "What I had day and night longed to be but was not able to be, I have become today. Today I belong to all of India. Within me there is no conflict between Hindus, Muslims, Christians or any other community. Today in India, every caste is my caste, and I can sit down and eat with each untouchable."

On the other hand, what Praneshacharya of Samskara feels after he has so to say tasted of the fruit of knowledge is described as follows:

> The Acharya felt not only remorse, but a lightness in the thought he was now a free man, relieved of his responsibility to lead the way, relieved of all authority. 'What manner of man am I? I am just like you—a soul driven by lust and hate—is this my first lesson in humility?... I am sin, my work is sin, my soul is sin, my birth is in sin.' No, no, even that is a lie. Must forget all words learned by heart, the heart may flow free like a child's....

When Praneshacharya goes back amidst the waiting villagers after this experience, all he can say to them is: 'I'm lost. I know nothing. You do whatever your hearts say.'

On the one hand we have Gora's proud declaration: "Today I am free. I feel no longer the fear that I may be polluted, that I may fall from my caste. I no longer need to watch every step of mine, lest I might be rendered impure through touching the untouchable." And on the other hand we have Praneshacharya's meek freedom! The Acharya of Samskara may indeed speak Sanskrit, but in his speech may be heard the confessional under tone of some existentialist hero of Sartre's or Camus—or I may of course be imagining it! In this confession of Samskara, there may be some trace of the medieval Indian vaishnava saints, but the sense of liberation here is quite something else, whatever its source might be.

In quest of identity, Anantha Murthy too like Tagore returns to India's past. For him, however, this past is something not to be contemplated but simply to be felt. He wants to dig up this past with its roots all complete, and to feel it. For Praneshacharya the past is like that "small sprout of sarsaparilla" which he pulls up by its roots on one occasion in the novel in order to smell it, for the reason that the root has acquired a special fragrance compounded of "that sod of the earth and the space above it." And never mind that what he has "tugged (up) with both hands" is only "half the length of the mother root"! It is because of such a tendency that Samskara bears a clearer stamp of Indianness than Gora. Witness as proof the one hundred and more notes on Sanskrit and Kannada words in the English translation of Samskara! May be that is why Samskara is a more 'Indian' novel in the eyes of Western scholars and readers, while Gora goes unregarded by them. Gora and the traditionally conditioned Praneshacharya both have to do with the Indian village, but how different is the experience of each and the image of the village in each case. Very probably Tagore felt no need to make Gora Indian by contriving scenes such as that of the cock-fight among the tribals!

It is not that Tagore did not wish to be an Indian, but he wished to be so in his own eyes and not in the eyes of the West. Recall for a moment Gora's proud challenges:

> We shall not let our country stand like an accused in an alien court to be tried under alien law. We shall not compare ourselves point by point with some Western ideal, in order to feel either shame or pride. We shall not feel embarrassed in the least before others or ourselves for the customs, faith, scriptures or society of the country we have been born in. We shall take to our bosom with a feeling of strength and pride all that belongs to our country, and we shall keep ourselves and our country free from humiliation ... We do not wish to have to prove to anyone whether we are good or bad, civilized or savage ... That we are ourselves is all we wish to feel, and feel it for all we are worth.

Where shall we find today this swadeshi tone, when so many Indian writers consider it a matter of

honour to be tried before some foreign court, and to offer proofs of their Indianness before Western critics!

It is our good fortune really that this tremendous responsibility has been claimed as peculiarly their own by Indian writers in English. This is but natural. If truth be told, it is these Indian writers in English alone who are the representative writers of "Indian literature", the literature of any other Indian language such as Hindi, Bengali or Tamil must remain "regional literature."

Anyhow, one of the more important issues which came up for debate after Independence was that of defining the Indian novel. Is there any distinct literary form such as the Indian novel? Or, as this question is being rephrased today; What is the Third World novel, and what are its defining characteristics? Seminar after seminar is being held in this country and abroad to discuss this question, and Indian writers in English as well as Indian professors of English are kept terribly busy. The whole endeavour is to prove that the Indian writers of today have left far behind the tradition of the realistic European novel of the nineteenth century, and that they are constructing a new and indigenous Indian narrative style based on the ancient tales and narratives of India. There is an attempt to incorporate within the process such myths, customs and beliefs of Indian life as are exotic for the West and therefore the objects of its special curiosity. So that the argument may not fall for lack of practical demonstration, our novelists and especially our English-language novelists are putting their heart and soul into the production of such novels. If we were to go by the results, the Indian novels in English today would seem to be rather more "Indian" than the so called "regional language" novels.

Some indication of this trend is to be found in an article by Anita Desai, "Indian Fiction Today", published in the Fall 1989 issue of the well known American journal Daedalus and by the illustrative pieces of fiction which appear with it. (In fact, the very title of this special issue of Daedalus is "Another India.") This well known Indo-Anglian novelist begins by referring to the Indian provenance of the "magic realism" in Salman Rushdie's novel Shame. Then, in an ironic glance at some younger writers, she observes that they are returning to an old fashioned style of narrative which is both "contemporary" and the "latest". As she puts it, "They found themselves travelling so far Westward that, the world being in the shape it is, they had arrived in the East again." Now, if this is "Indian literature", there would seem to be a need to examine afresh the very concept of "Indian Literature" as of "Third World Literature."

On the face of it, such "Indian" writers too are against colonization in literature. But the belief is entrenched in their minds that it is only by having gone through a journey of the West that one can return to the East. The helplessness of the Indian writers of our colonial phase is understandable, as perhaps also of those post-colonial Indian writers who have been travellers in the West. But how can one accept this as the destiny of the whole of Indian literature?

But some Indian writers do talk like this, and especially during their visits to Europe and America; it is as if they wished to assure their Western audiences that a "journey" to the West is essential for attaining an Indian identity. Only recently, Nirmal Varma has made similar statements in a lecture on "India and Europe: A Search for Areas of Commitment", delivered at the University of Heidelberg. He begins by quoting with approval a statement by J.L. Mehta, an Indian scholar resident in Europe: "In the East there is no way for us except to go through Europeanization and then beyond it." He goes on to ask: "If the colonial experience of the last two hundred years is not a journey through Europe, what else is it?" And then follows the conclusion: "What India needed was to go through the process of a decolonization of the self in order to regain one's "atmatatva" (quiddity), which only one's own tradition can activate and no foreign agency."

The intention here is unexceptionable, but words like "atmatatva" and "tradition" raise at the same time some inconvenient questions. If by "atmatatva" is meant not the given "atman" of vedanta,

then it is not something to be regained but a conscious ness which needs to be constructed and developed in the very process of spiritual decolonization. The development of such a consciousness is possible only through struggle and struggle with oneself. As for "tradition", it is not something given either. Colonialism too have represented a particular kind of Indian tradition, and in response to it, not one but several alternative traditions have been put forward by India. Needless to say, the business of construction of tradition goes on unabated by neocolonialism.

In the same special issue of Daedalus on "Another India", the editorial emphasises more than once that the distinction of India lies in "all that is primordial in that society, that has not simply given way before the power of modern technology." This of course is the image of India that the West has always cherished. If we were to accept this in the name of our tradition, the developed countries of the West would be even better pleased than we ourselves might be. But could this trully be called decolonization? In the name of preserving this primordial Indian tradition, some neo-Gandhian intellectuals within India have been constantly campaigning against modernization and development projects. To all this another new dimension has been added by the call for protection of environment. This too is an aspect of decolonization.

Two years previously in this very journal Daedalus, in its Winter 1987 issue, there had appeared an article by Cathleen D. MacCarthy under the title: "From Cold war to Cultural Development: the International Cultural Activities of the Ford Foundation 1950-80." The article charted the change in policy effected by the Ford Foundation in its cultural activities in South Asian and South-East Asian countries, beginning in 1967. Before this date, the Ford Foundation had been conducting an extensive campaign for promoting a climate of opinion against communism in Asia in particular and the World in general by making financial grants to an organization called the Congress for Cultural Freedom. But after The New York Times revealed in 1966 the fact that the Congress for Cultural Freedom had links with the C.I.A., the Ford Foundation continued for a while to fund the Congress under its hastily changed name and then, after the sudden closure of this new organization as well, it began to act directly in its own right on the policy of "cultural development." Under this new policy, greater emphasis was laid on "preserving one's own existence and on having a name of one's own" than on being "modern". In other words, "identity" was held to be more important than "modernity," regardless of whether the identity was religious or racial or regional or linguistic. That was why greater attention was paid to preserving the ancient traditions of these backward nations. It is not accidental that many movements in favour of all these kinds of "identities" in India also began at about the same time. There may or may not have been some planned conspiracy of the West behind these movements, but it is hard to discount altogether a connection between the two of some kind or the other. How ironical that America cares more for the past of India than India itself, and that at the misery of our tribals and aborigines it is America which is more distressed than we are. Such is Christian compassion. It was again at about this time that the notion of a "Third World" was conceived, which led in time to the conception of a "Third World Literature". Clearly, this is a figment of the fertile imagination of the "First World", the very axiom of all whose "post-modernist" formulations is the concept of "difference." According to the West, this "difference" is the "destiny" of the East, so, if the East were to go on preserving this "difference" in every possible way, that would be its ultimate value for the West. How different is this view from the old kind of Europeanization and Americanization! And isn't this too yet another devious device of colonization? If some of us today cannot see this deviousness of colonization it is because cultural colonization has become a part and parcel of our consciousness. It is perhaps even lodged in our subconscious and is, in Frederic Jameson's phrase, our "political unconscious". So inescapable is the pressure of this subconscious that we often define our very identity in the language of our erstwhile colonial masters—and not only in their language but through the very concepts constructed by them. The spirit that we seek to exorcise has thus infiltrated the very mantra through which we seek to exorcise it. One cannot help

feeling at times that in this regard, the writers of the preceding generation were rather more aware and vigilant than us. That may be the reason why Indian writers of the post-Independence era have softened a little towards colonialism. A certain ambivalence has entered their attitudes. Such ambivalence itself is often accepted as a characteristic of modernism. It is taken to be not only part of the polite manners of civilized folk, but also a desirable value of modern poetics and aesthetics. Even our language has acquired a kind of ambivalence. The direct robustness of our native prose is changing: one only has to compare it with the so called undeveloped but thoroughly indigenous prose of the nineteenth century for ample proof of it. For this reason, a fundamental question before a writer now is of his language; it was the greatest poetic worry for Raghuvir Sahay among recent Hindi writers. Ultimately this is a problem, as Muktibodh put it, of Vyaktitvantarana, or transformation of personality.

The question still remains: How should we oppose the new onslaught of colonization? With our tradition? But which tradition? Tradition itself is a reconstruction: the rediscovery of the past by the present as desired. The colonialists of yesterday and the imperialists of today are presenting an image of our past which is primitive and chiefly an index of our backwardness. And closer at home, the tradition presented by Hindu fundamentalists is something else altogether, something extremely one dimensional and narrow.

Nor can we find a way out through any "nationalist allegory". If we were to pit an image of our nation against colonialism, whose nation would it be? The nation of those who hold the reins of the state? But what then will be the nation of those who are oppressed by the state and wish therefore to change it? How can those identify with this nationalism who are obliged to live at a level not fit for human beings even forty years after Independence? For how long can a dalit go on sacrificing his identity for the identity of the nation? The nationalist consciousness which prevailed at the beginning of the twentieth century cannot now be revived, nor will it do to be invoking it. We must confront the problem on the grounds of the present. And on that plane we cannot find an escape route by saying that it is only a limited section of Indian society that has been colonized, and that too superficially. However limited and superficial cultural colonization may be, it is still hegemonic. It is this small colonized class that has claimed to be the cultural and literary avant garde of India after Independence, and it lays claim too to having modernized and developed Indian literature. This class also lays claim to having effected decolonization, and never mind the fact that a lot of it is in reality pseudo-decolonization.

Decolonization does not mean a rejection of the West altogether. There are many even among the writers of the West who have raised their pens against colonization and imperialism. It will be shortsighted on our part to dissociate ourselves from this tradition of the West in the name of a distinctive identity of "Third World Literature."

There was a time when the socialist literature of the so-called "Second World" provided inspiration and energy to this "Third World Literature." Today, that "Second World" too is beginning to disintegrate. But this does not mean that its literature too has gone down the drain. It need hardly be pointed out that the literature of that world is considerably more liberated and exciting today. And it is far more to our purpose as well. We may wish to look at the challenges of the twentieth century in this perspective. I have no ready-made solutions, and perhaps no one else has either. And even if one did, there is no guarantee that such a solution will satisfy everyone. A writer believes merely in raising questions, and such questions can sometimes be raised through the act of putting things in a certain perspective. Such at the moment has been my effort and intention.

Finally, one last word, it is strange that no one today should be talking about the future, whereas there is a decade to go before the twentieth century ends, a whole decade open to new possibilities and vulnerable to new anxieties and turbulences. Why do we forget that this is the century which has

witnessed two World Wars, with the rehearsal for a third one now going on before our very eyes (the U.S.-Iraq war). Utterly unexpected, and a reminder to us that we haven't yet seen the end of imperialism. What was ended is socialism, which was once thought to be the future of the world and about which a writer of the West had written: I have gone and seen the future, and it is working miracles. After all, which way is history headed? What happened to that concept of 'Progress", which Europe of the nineteenth century and India of the mid-twentieth had such firm faith in? In this context, I am reminded of that angel described by Walter Benjamin who is nothing but History:

> His face is turned towards the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.

The model of this pen-portrait is Paul Klee's painting, "Angelus Novus". After such an ironical image of history, what more remains to say?

(Translated from Hindi by Harish Trivedi)

14.4. BRIEF SUMMARY OF ESSAY 'DECOLONISING THE INDIAN MIND

"Decolonising the Indian Mind" is an essay that explores the profound impact of colonialism on Indian society and culture. The author argues that colonial rule not only imposed foreign political and economic systems but also deeply influenced the Indian psyche and intellectual life. The essay emphasizes that decolonization is not merely about political independence but also involves a cultural and mental shift.

The essay provides a historical overview of how colonial powers, particularly the British, affected Indian institutions, education, and social norms. The colonial era brought about significant changes in Indian thought processes, often undermining indigenous knowledge and practices. It highlights how the colonial education system prioritized Western knowledge and languages, leading to a marginalization of traditional Indian knowledge systems and languages. This created a lasting impact on how Indians perceive their own history and culture.

In the essay, Namvar Singh discusses the psychological impact of colonialism, including feelings of inferiority and self-doubt among Indians about their own culture and achievements. The colonial mindset, which valued Western ways of thinking and living, continued to affect Indian attitudes long after independence. The essay argues for the importance of reclaiming and revitalizing indigenous knowledge, languages, and cultural practices. It suggests that true decolonization requires a conscious effort to challenge and reframe colonial legacies in both education and cultural attitudes. It also touches on the contemporary implications of decolonizing the mind, suggesting that while political independence has been achieved, cultural and intellectual freedom is an ongoing process. The need for a renewed focus on Indian perspectives and values in various fields is emphasized.

"Decolonising the Indian Mind" is a call to address the lingering effects of colonialism on Indian culture and thought. It advocates for a reawakening and reaffirmation of Indian identity and knowledge systems to foster a more inclusive and self-affirming intellectual environment. He admits that Colonisation of the mind is a process slower than the economic and political takeover of power because of the traditions and history of particular populations that make them resist actively or passively this mental takeover. Thus there are sites identified through which cultural hegemony is organised. Most commonly, these are rewritten histories, language and education policies and cultural texts that may

be literary, cinematic and so on. The trappings of power magnify the oppressor into one better than the oppressed. When the imperial power exits and a politically free nation take down the structures created by the colonial power, it is a rapid and victorious wave of decolonisation. But the decolonisation of the mind remains a continuous and slow process because of the internalisation of cultural domination of the imperial power. To this may be added the fact that the centres of power relocate and function in new forms reincarnated as trans-national capital and global mass media with all the links between the two. These are termed the forces of neo-colonialism and their new centres are called 'metropolitan centres'. They are located in the financial and cultural capitals of the United Kingdom and the United States of America, including in universities, academies and other institutions of higher learning. The debates and opinions that emanate from these centres are hegemonic and dominate the discourse of colonisation. In this context, one of the prime strategies of decolonisation for formerly colonised peoples would be to resist the categories offered by these very debates even as one engages with them. There is a cultural flip side to this that cannot be ignored, as it would leave the discussion of decolonisation incomplete.

14.5 POST COLONIAL ELEMENTS IN THE ESSAY 'DECOLONISING THE INDIAN MIND'

In the essay "Decolonising the Indian Mind," several post-colonial elements are addressed, reflecting the ways in which colonial legacies persist and how they can be challenged and transformed. Here are some key post-colonial elements highlighted in the essay:

Colonial Legacy in Education: The essay examines how colonial education systems privileged Western knowledge and languages, marginalizing indigenous knowledge and educational practices. This legacy continues to influence Indian education and intellectual life, where Western paradigms often dominate, and traditional Indian knowledge is undervalued.

Cultural Reclamation: A significant post-colonial theme in the essay is the call for reclaiming and revitalizing indigenous cultural practices, languages, and knowledge systems. This involves recognizing and valuing traditional Indian knowledge and cultural expressions that were suppressed or undervalued during colonial rule.

Psychological Impact of Colonialism: The essay discusses the psychological impact of colonialism, such as internalized inferiority and self-doubt among Indians regarding their own cultural and intellectual heritage. This reflects a common post-colonial concern with the mental and emotional effects of colonial domination.

Challenging Western Norms: The essay advocates for questioning and deconstructing Western-centric norms and values that were imposed during colonial rule. It emphasizes the need for developing a more nuanced understanding of Indian culture and history that does not solely conform to Western frameworks.

Identity and Self-Perception: The essay highlights issues related to identity and self-perception in the post-colonial context. It argues that true decolonization involves reasserting a positive and self-affirming Indian identity, free from the residual effects of colonial subjugation and inferiority complexes.

Cultural and Intellectual Independence: There is a focus on achieving cultural and intellectual independence from colonial influences. The essay suggests that post-colonial India must develop its own frameworks for understanding and interpreting its history, culture, and society, rather than relying on colonial or Western interpretations.

Continuing Colonial Structures: The essay points out that while political independence has been achieved, many colonial structures and attitudes persist in contemporary Indian society. It argues for a concerted effort to address and dismantle these lingering colonial influences in various aspects of public life and thought.

In short, the post-colonial elements in "Decolonising the Indian Mind" involve a critique of the ongoing influence of colonial legacies, a call for cultural and intellectual renewal, and the pursuit of a more authentic and self-determined Indian identity.

14.6 LET'S SUM UP

In this Unit we have focused on the idea of decolonisation of the mind. We have examined some of the sites of cultural colonisation and seen how the perspectives of postcolonial criticism can help us formulate strategies of reading and resisting cultural texts. We have also seen how the forces of neo-colonialism pose new threats in an unequal world order. We have then gone on to suggest as critics have done that though it is impossible to decolonize minds completely, resistance in every new form must continue. We have given you:

- a detailed introduction to decolonisation of the mind.
- an idea to understand decolonisation theory and literature .
- an outline of chief characteristics of postcolonial literature .
- a detailed discussion on major writers of postcolonial theory and literature.
- a brief guidelines on how to read a literary discipline.

14.7 QUESTIONS

1. What do you understand by decolonisation of the mind?
2. How is the literary theory of decolonising the mind put into practice? Mention the arguments used in this theory?
3. How does language play a role in cultural colonisation?
4. What are the sites across which cultural domination is organised?
5. What are the forces of neo-colonialism and how can they be resisted?
6. In "Decolonization of Indian Minds," how does Namvar Singh address the impact of colonial education systems on the intellectual and cultural development of India?
7. How does his definition compare to other decolonization frameworks used in post-colonial studies?
8. Examine the role of language and literature in Singh's analysis of colonial and post-colonial

Indian identity?

9. What does he see as the primary obstacles to a successful decolonization of Indian minds within the current intellectual landscape according to Namvar Singh ?

10. Analyze the significance of Namvar Singh's argument about the "intellectual and cultural subordination" of India under colonial rule ?

Short Answer Type Question

1. **What is the primary focus of Namvar Singh's "Decolonization of Indian Minds"?**

The primary focus is to critique the lingering effects of colonialism on Indian intellectual and cultural life and to advocate for a reassertion of indigenous perspectives and values.

2. **How does Namvar Singh define "decolonization" in his work?**

Singh defines decolonization as a process of reclaiming and revitalizing indigenous cultural and intellectual traditions that were suppressed or distorted under colonial rule.

3. **What role does language play in Singh's arguments about colonialism?**

Singh argues that colonial languages and education systems have marginalized indigenous languages and knowledge, contributing to a cultural and intellectual subordination that needs to be addressed through the promotion of native languages.

4. **Which colonial impact on Indian education does Singh highlight?**

Singh highlights that colonial education systems were designed to serve colonial interests, often disregarding and undermining indigenous educational traditions and values.

5. **What alternative strategies for intellectual revitalization does Singh propose?**

Singh proposes a critical re-evaluation of historical narratives, the promotion of indigenous languages, and the reassertion of native philosophical and cultural traditions as strategies for intellectual revitalization.

6. **How does Singh view contemporary Indian intellectual movements in relation to colonialism?**

Singh sees contemporary Indian intellectual movements as having been influenced by colonial thought patterns, and he critiques their failure to fully address or overcome these colonial legacies.

7. **What is Singh's perspective on the impact of colonialism on Indian philosophy?**

Singh argues that colonialism has distorted Indian philosophical traditions by imposing foreign frameworks and marginalizing indigenous thought systems.

8. **How does Singh propose addressing the psychological impacts of colonialism?**

   Singh suggests that addressing the psychological impacts of colonialism involves fostering a sense of cultural self-awareness and pride, and reclaiming indigenous identities and values.

9. **What does Singh argue about the historical narratives constructed during colonial rule?**

Singh argues that colonial historical narratives often distorted or ignored indigenous perspectives, and he advocates for a re-evaluation and re-interpretation of history from an indigenous standpoint.

10. **How does Namvar Singh relate the concept of intellectual and cultural subordination to contemporary Indian society?**

Singh relates intellectual and cultural subordination to contemporary Indian society by showing how colonial legacies continue to influence and constrain Indian intellectual and cultural life, affecting national identity and self-perception.

14.8 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT- 15 GAYATRI C. SPIVAK:' CAN THE SUBALTERN PEAK?'

STRUCTURE

15.0 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit, we shall discuss Gayatri C. Spivak's famous work 'Can the Subaltern speak? as a postcolonial treatise. We shall also learn here the intellectual, social and political reasons that influenced this concept of literary genre and gave a certain direction to its subsequent term 'subaltern'. After reading this unit carefully, you will be able to:

- Understand the main trends in postcolonial literature;
- Describe the social and political reason in its development;
- Understand the subaltern theory.
- Discuss the Spivak's thought about postcolonial literature.

15.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, we have discussed several literary genres which come from a different culture, tradition and ideas. In this unit, we are going to learn about Gayatri C. Spivak and her postcolonial thought from its initial point of origin and development with historical background. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is a prominent scholar in postcolonial studies, known for her critical theories on colonialism, identity, and representation. Her influential work often delves into the complexities of how colonial legacies affect both individuals and societies. One of her most significant contributions is the essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988). It explores the impacts of colonization on cultures, identities, and societies. Do go through all the sections and answer the questions given in 'Check Your Progress'. This will help you to remember what you have read and also give you some practice in expressing yourself in your own words. We do hope you enjoy working through this unit.

15.2 LIFE AND WORKS OF GAYATRI CHAKRAVORTY SPIVAK

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is a prominent scholar and theorist in the fields of literary theory, postcolonial studies, and feminism. Her work has significantly shaped contemporary understanding of these areas, particularly through her engagement with issues of representation, marginalization, and power. She was born on February 24, 1942, in Calcutta (now Kolkata), India. She was raised in a family that valued education and intellectual engagement. She studied at the University of Calcutta and later pursued advanced studies in the United States. She earned her M.A. and Ph.D. from Cornell University. Her academic journey included significant exposure to diverse intellectual traditions and critical theories.

Spivak has held various prestigious academic positions. She has been a professor at Columbia University, where she has been a significant figure in the Department of English and Comparative Literature. She has also been involved with institutions such as the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Delhi. As a leading figure of literary theory and criticism, she has provided an overview of her contributions in various literary theory and studies. These literary theories are:

Postcolonial Theory: Spivak is a key figure in postcolonial studies, offering critical insights into the ways colonial histories and structures continue to influence contemporary societies. Her work has been foundational in understanding the complexities of representation and power.

Feminist Theory: Her feminist scholarship intersects with her postcolonial work, particularly in her analysis of how gender, class, and race intersect in colonial and postcolonial contexts.

Deconstruction: Spivak engages with deconstructionist theory, particularly the work of Jacques Derrida, to critique and expand upon traditional literary and philosophical approaches.

Advocacy and Activism: Beyond academia, Spivak is involved in various forms of advocacy, particularly in promoting educational initiatives and addressing issues of social justice and inequality.

Her Works

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is a prominent scholar in the fields of postcolonial studies, feminist theory, and literary criticism. Her works often explore themes related to colonialism, imperialism, and the intersections of race, gender, and class. Some of her most influential works include:

1. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988) - This essay is one of Spivak's most famous works, critiquing the ways in which the voices of marginalized groups are often silenced or misrepresented in Western discourse. It addresses the challenges of representing the subaltern in academic and political contexts.

2. "In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics" (1987) - This collection of essays explores various aspects of cultural politics, including the implications of colonialism and the role of intellectuals in postcolonial societies.

3. "A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Towards a History of the Vanishing Present" (1999) - In this book, Spivak examines the intellectual and political consequences of colonialism and critiques various forms of postcolonial theory.

4. "Death of a Discipline" (2003) - This book addresses the state of the humanities and argues for a reevaluation of the discipline of cultural studies, particularly in the context of globalization and the changing landscape of higher education.

5. "An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization" (2012) - Spivak explores the role of aesthetics and education in the context of globalization, considering how cultural production and intellectual practices are shaped by global economic and political forces.

6. "Other Asias" (2008) - This book is a collection of essays that examine the implications of Asian studies within the broader context of global and postcolonial theory.

7. "The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues" (1990) - This collection of interviews and dialogues provides insight into Spivak's thinking and methodology, offering a deeper understanding of her critical perspectives.

Spivak’s work is known for its complex theoretical frameworks and her commitment to exploring the voices and experiences of those marginalized by dominant power structures. Her contributions have profoundly influenced the fields of literary criticism, postcolonial studies, and feminist theory, challenging conventional understandings and advocating for a more inclusive and critical approach to knowledge and representation.

15.3 SUMMARY OF ESSAY ' CAN THE SUBALTERN SPEAK?'

In the essay ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’ by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, the author explores the ways in which marginalized groups, or subalterns, are represented and often silenced in Western discourse. Spivak critiques the ability of intellectuals and academics to truly represent the voices of these marginalized groups, arguing that such representations often fail to accurately or effectively convey their experiences. She delves into postcolonial theory and questions the power dynamics at play in how knowledge and voices are produced and consumed. She examines historical and contemporary examples, such as the treatment of Indian women in colonial contexts, to illustrate how subalterns are excluded from meaningful discourse. The essay is a critical reflection on the limitations of representing the subaltern and challenges readers to consider the ethical implications of how marginalized voices are heard and interpreted. Spivak is a leading contemporary feminist deconstructionist who pays careful attention to issues of gender and race. Her use of the term 'subaltern' is influenced by the Italian thinker Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci consistently referred to a subordinate position in terms of class, gender, race and culture. Spivak's essay *'Can the Subaltern Speak?'* addressed the way the 'subaltern' woman is constructed, as absent or silent or not listened to. The 'muteness' of women in postcolonial societies is the main issue which her work confronts. The main argument of Spivak in this essay is that generally intellectuals or those well of represent for the subaltern or those who are disadvantaged. Her concern is that it and when these dispossessed will get a voice.

`The main argument of her essay is that, between patriarchy and imperialism, subject constitution and object formation, the figure of woman disappears not into a pristine nothingness, but into a marginal position between tradition and modernization. Spivak uses the term 'subaltern' (of lower rank) for women, blacks, the colonized and the working class. Subalternity comes to suggest the repressive dominance of white Western thinking and an allegory of the displacement of the gendered and colonized (i.e. subaltern) subject, by the imposition of narratives of internationalism and nationalism. In these kinds of formulations one of the possible pitfalls is attributing an absolute power to the hegemonic discourse in creating the native and not making enough room for the resistance of the native.

15.4 POST COLONIAL APPROACH IN ' CAN THE SUBALTERN SPEAK?'

In "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak employs a postcolonial approach to critique the ways in which marginalized groups are represented and heard in Western discourse. Here’s a closer look at how this approach is applied in the essay:

15.4.1 Postcolonial Critique

- **Historical Context and Power Dynamics**: Spivak explores how colonialism has shaped the representation and suppression of marginalized voices. She argues that the colonial and postcolonial systems have historically silenced and misrepresented the subaltern—those who are socially, politically, and economically marginalized.

- **Theoretical Framework**: Spivak draws on postcolonial theory to examine the power structures that influence whose voices are heard and how they are represented. She uses concepts from postcolonial thinkers like Edward Said and Michel Foucault to analyze the dynamics between the colonizers and the colonized, and how these dynamics persist in contemporary contexts.

15.4.1 Key Points in the Essay

- **Representation and Agency**: Spivak questions whether subalterns (those on the margins of

society) can truly speak for themselves within the framework established by dominant (often Western) cultures. She argues that even when subalterns attempt to speak, their voices are often filtered through the interpretations and biases of those in positions of power.

- **Historical Examples**: The essay uses historical examples, such as the case of the Bengali widow and the representation of Indian women under colonial rule, to illustrate how colonial and postcolonial systems have silenced and misrepresented marginalized voices.
- **Critique of Western Intellectuals**: Spivak critiques Western intellectuals and academics for their role in representing subaltern voices. She argues that their attempts to speak for the subaltern often end up perpetuating the same power imbalances and exclusions that silence these groups in the first place.
- **Ethical Considerations**: Spivak also addresses the ethical implications of representing marginalized voices. She suggests that efforts to amplify subaltern voices must be approached with an awareness of the power dynamics involved, and that genuine representation requires a critical examination of how these voices are mediated and interpreted.

In short, Spivak's postcolonial approach in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" critically examines the intersections of power, representation, and voice, questioning whether it is truly possible for marginalized groups to be heard and understood within the existing frameworks of Western discourse.

15.5 LET'S SUM UP

In this Unit we have focused on the impact of colonialism on marginalized group. We have also seen how the forces of neo-colonialism pose new threats in an unequal world order. We have given you:

- a detailed introduction to subaltern people in colonial period.
- description of the social and political reason in its development;
- a complete detail the subaltern theory.
- A detail of Spivak's thought about postcolonial literature
- an outline of chief characteristics of postcolonial literature .
- a brief guideline on how to read a literary discipline.

15.6 QUESTIONS

1. What is Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's concept of "strategic essentialism". Discuss with the notions of identity politics within postcolonial discourse?
2. Discuss Spivak's critique "Can the Subaltern Speak?" shed light on the approaches to Third World women's issues?
3. How does Spivak's concept of the "subaltern" contribute to the understanding of marginalized voices in the context of global power dynamics?
4. What are the implications of Spivak's argument about the limitations of representing subaltern voices for contemporary social justice movements in "Can the Subaltern Speak? " ?
5. How does Spivak's deconstruction of colonial and imperialist discourses in her writings "Can the Subaltern Speak?" .
6. How does Spivak's analysis of language and representation in "A Critique of Postcolonial

Reason" address the issue of epistemic violence against marginalized communities?

7. In what ways does Spivak's engagement with poststructuralism influence her approach to postcolonial criticism, and how does it intersect with her feminist views?
8. How does Spivak's exploration of "epistemic violence" contribute to a broader understanding of how knowledge production can perpetuate inequalities and oppression?
9. In what ways does Spivak's concept of "subaltern" intersect with her views on globalization and its impact on local cultures and identities?

Short Answer Type Question

1. **What is the central argument of Spivak's essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?"**

   Spivak argues that the subaltern (marginalized groups) cannot truly speak or be heard within the structures of power that dominate discourse, as their voices are often co-opted or silenced by colonial and imperialist narratives.

2. **What does Spivak mean by "strategic essentialism"?**

   "Strategic essentialism" refers to the temporary adoption of essentialist identities by marginalized groups to achieve political and social goals, despite the recognition that such identities are socially constructed and reductive.

3. **How does Spivak critique Western feminism in her works?**

   Spivak critiques Western feminism for often overlooking the diverse experiences of women in the Global South and for imposing its own frameworks and solutions without understanding local contexts.

4. **What role does Spivak attribute to intellectuals in postcolonial contexts?**

   Spivak believes intellectuals should critically engage with and address the power imbalances in knowledge production and representation, and advocate for the marginalized without speaking for them.

5. **How does Spivak define the term "subaltern"?**

   The "subaltern" refers to groups of people who are outside the hegemonic power structures and cannot access the dominant discourses that shape societal and historical narratives.

6. **What is "epistemic violence" according to Spivak?**

   "Epistemic violence" is the harm done to knowledge systems and epistemologies of marginalized groups when their perspectives and voices are ignored or misrepresented by dominant cultures.

7. **How does Spivak's work intersect with poststructuralism?**

   Spivak's work incorporates poststructuralist ideas by challenging fixed meanings and emphasizing the complexities of representation, power, and identity in postcolonial contexts.

8. **What is Spivak's stance on the representation of colonial subjects in literature?**

   Spivak argues that colonial literature often misrepresents or marginalizes the voices of colonial subjects, reinforcing the power dynamics between the colonizers and the colonized.

9. **How does Spivak address the issue of agency in her postcolonial analysis?**

   Spivak examines how marginalized groups may struggle for agency within oppressive

structures, and highlights the difficulty of their resistance being recognized or truly heard.

10. **What impact has Spivak's work had on postcolonial studies?**

    Spivak's work has profoundly influenced postcolonial studies by introducing critical concepts such as the subaltern, strategic essentialism, and epistemic violence, reshaping discussions on power, representation, and identity.

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UNIT-16 PREM CHAND: 'KARMBHUMI'

Structure

16.0 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit, we shall discuss Prem Chand, a well known novelist of Hindi literature and his one of the most famous novel 'Karmbhumi' as a postcolonial treatise. We shall also discuss the intellectual, social and political reasons that influenced this concept of literary genre and gave a certain direction to its subsequent development. After reading this Unit carefully, you will be able to:

- Understand the main trends in colonial period;
- Describe the social and political reason in development of postcolonial literature.
- Discuss the historical background of postcolonial literature.
- Discuss Munshi Prem Chand's thoughts about colonial rule and its impact on current society.

16.1 INTRODUCTION

In Unit-15, we have discussed Gayatri C. Spivak as a postcolonial theorist who come from a different culture, tradition and ideas. In this unit, we are going to learn postcolonial literature from its Indian point of view. In this unit, we will study Prem Chand and his one of the most famous novel 'Karmbhumi' as postcolonial novel. It is a significant work in Hindi literature and can be examined through the lens of postcolonial literature. Published in 1930, it is a novel that reflects the socio-political and economic conditions of colonial India. Do go through all the sections and answer the questions given in 'Check Your Progress'. This will help you to remember what you have read and also give you some practice in expressing yourself in your own words. We do hope you enjoy working through this unit.

16.2 LIFE AND WORKS OF MUNSHI PREM CHAND

Munshi Premchand (1880-1936) was a seminal figure in Indian literature, known for his contributions to both Hindi and Urdu literature. His works are celebrated for their social realism, rich depiction of rural life, and critique of societal issues. He was born as Dhanpat Rai Srivastava on July 31, 1880, in Lamhi, a village near Varanasi. His early life was marked by financial difficulties, which influenced his later writings. He studied at various institutions but had to leave his formal education due to financial constraints. Despite this, he was a voracious reader and taught himself various subjects, including literature and social issues.

He worked as a teacher and later as a deputy magistrate. His professional life was intertwined with his literary career, and he used his position to address social issues. He was also involved in the freedom movement and had affiliations with various progressive organizations. He faced numerous personal hardships, including health problems. Premchand passed away on October 8, 1936, but left a lasting legacy in Indian literature.

Works

Novels and Short Stories:

"Godaan" (1936): One of Premchand's most acclaimed novels, it delves into the plight of the rural poor in India. The story follows a peasant named Hori and his struggles against social and economic injustice.

"Nirmala" (1925): This novel deals with the issues of child marriage and the position of women in society, portraying the tragic consequences of social norms."Karmabhoomi" (1932): Set against the backdrop of the freedom struggle, it explores themes of nationalism and social reform.

Short Stories:

"The Shroud" ("Kafan"): A powerful story that critiques the exploitation of the poor and the insensitivity of society towards their plight.

"The Drowning Man" ("Naukrani"): Reflects on the human condition and the indifference of society to individual suffering.

Themes and Style of his works

Social Realism: Premchand's writing is known for its realism, depicting the everyday lives of ordinary people, especially the rural poor. His stories often highlight the social and economic inequalities prevalent in Indian society.

Humanism and Compassion: His works exhibit deep compassion for the underprivileged and a commitment to social reform. He often used his writing as a tool for social criticism and to advocate for change.

Language and Style: Premchand wrote primarily in Hindi and Urdu. His language was straightforward yet evocative, making his works accessible to a wide audience. He employed a naturalistic style to bring out the realities of life.

In short, Munshi Premchand is revered as one of the greatest writers in Indian literature. His works continue to be widely read and studied for their rich portrayal of Indian society and their critique of social injustices. He remains a towering figure in the literary landscape of South Asia, influencing generations of writers and readers with his powerful narratives and social commentary.

16.3 SUMMARY OF THE KARMBHUMI

"Karmabhoomi" (1932) is a realistic novel published in 1932. Premchand wrote this novel during the Civil Disobedience Movement. This novel is written on the background of the freedom movement which also raises the people's problems. This novel portrays the issues of the middle and lower classes. Karmabhoomi means the field of work of a person. In the novel Karmabhoomi, the author has given the message of Karmayog to the readers through the title. In the novel, the richest of the rich people sacrifice their happiness and work for the welfare of others. In this life, when a person starts worrying more about the joy and sorrows of others than worrying about his comforts, only then his life bear fruit in the world of Karmabhoomi. The meaning of life lies in the happiness of others.

Karmabhoomi is a realistic novel. Every character portrayed in it is the best example of realistic psychology. The problems of Karmabhoomi arise from the concrete realities of the society. Premchand presents the ugliness of reality in a very restrained manner. In Karmabhoomi, Premchand has assessed the problems of society, life, and the individual from a very realistic point of view. The incident of rape of Munni, the beastliness of Mr. Ghosh, Salim in crushing the tax ban, and firing to prevent the entry of Harijans in temples, etc., have been depicted in such a horrific way that even Karuna feels pity after seeing them. Salim, Lala Samarkand, Kale Khan, Sukhda, etc. are realistic characters. But in the novel, an attempt has been made to save all these characters through ideals in the end.

The novel Karmabhoomi begins with Amarkant's inability to pay his school fees. Salim is his friend who pays his fees. The reason for not being able to pay the fees is the ongoing rift between Amarkant and his father Lala Samarkant. There is a huge difference in their thoughts but Naina brings them together. Naina is Amarkant's half-sister but looks similar to Amarkant. The novel's story takes a new turn when Amarkant marries Sukhda. As per Lala Samarkant's wish, Sukhda also asks Amarkant to work at the shop. Amarkant now studies while sitting at the shop. While working there, he meets Kale Khan, who comes to Samarkant to sell stolen goods. There he meets a Pathani woman who is Sakina's grandmother, to whom Lala Samarkant gives five rupees a month. On seeing these two characters, Amarkant's respect for his father increases. Through Pathanin, he meets Sakina and their closeness increases. Amarkant wants to marry Sakina by abandoning Sukhda because he and his wife were of two different natures. Amerkant and Sakina’s love is unsuccessful because of opposition of society. Amarkant leaves the city. Sukhda also recognizes her mistakes after Amarkant's departure and takes part in the movement for the entry of untouchables into the temple and goes to jail. On the other hand, Amarkant also serves a jail sentence while supporting the farmers' movement. The novel ends in jail. Naina dies. Salim and Sakina get tied to each other. Amarkant and Sukhda also happily accept each other.

16.3.1 The Main Problems of the Novel 'Karmabhoomi'

(I) The Problem of Land,

(II) The Problem of Reducing Rent,

(III) The Problem of Agricultural Labourers,

(IV) The Problem of Entry of Untouchables in Temples,

(V) The Problem of Women's Insecurity,

(VI) The Problem of Equal Rights for Wives, etc.

16.3.2 The Chamcters of the Novel 'Karmabhoomi'

Amarkant - Hero

Sukhda - Heroine

Samarkant - Amarkant's father

Renuka Devi - Sukhda's mother

Naina - Amarkant's sister

Munni - The village girl who was raped

Salim - Amarkant's friend

Sakina - the one whom Amarkant was in love with

Kale Khan - a peddler of stolen goods

Prof. Shanthikumar - Amar's mentor

There are other characters in the novel that have come in the context through which the story has been taken to its climax. There are many characters like Seth Dhaniram, Chaudhary Gudar, Pathani, Mr. Ghosh etc. Premchand brings out the true face of society through these characters. Amarkant who was an exploiter of humanity becomes a social worker in the end. Kale Khan whose life is spent in murder and crime, also retires from his evil deeds in the end. Salim, the character of the novel who grinds the innocent people in the mill of oppression in the midst of governance and authority, becomes their protector in the end. Dhaniram also serves humanity in the end. And because of him everyone is released. In this way we see that Premchand has planned the characters according to the circumstances.

16.3.2.1 Character Sketch of Sukhda

Sukhda, the heroine of the novel Karmabhoomi, was initially a girl with a youthful attitude. Her repeated arguments with Amarkant and convincing him show that she is an educated and logical character in the novel who makes Amarkant aware of his responsibilities towards the family. Her own selfishness lies behind this too; she does not want to tolerate the taunts of her father-in-law. Sukhda, who grew up in luxury, cannot tolerate the rebukes given for small things and hence asks Amarkant to take up his responsibilities himself.

At the end of the novel, Sukhda who sacrifices her life for wealth and luxury becomes a social worker. She who was raised in feudal culture and was opposed to the entry of Harijans in temples, the same Sukhda becomes ready to oppose religion when she sees it being protected by bullets. Through Sukhda's character, Premchand establishes idealistic realism.

16.3.2.2 Character Sketch of Amarkant

Amarkant, the hero of the novel Karmabhoomi, creates his own unique identity by representing the middle-class student community. The development of his character can also be seen in his love affairs. The conceptual distance between him and his father increase due to differences in their thoughts. His distance from Sukhda is also due to the clash of their egos. This distance makes him dislike money. After separating from his father, his household runs on the income Sukhda gets as a teacher. Because Sukhda does not like him selling Khadi, he is drawn towards Sakina due to all these reasons. His love for Sakina is not justified. He leaves home and starts living a rural life. There, due to the simplicity and spontaneity of the villagers, his sociability develops. He spreads education there and makes the villagers averse to drinking alcohol and eating meat. In the situation of global recession, people are unable to pay rent, and Amarkant leads them in this movement. And finally, he proves the worth of his character by going to jail for the crime of engaging in social service and giving a rebellious speech.

16.3.2.3 Character Sketch of Munni and Sakina

We saw the character traits of Sukhda as the heroine of the novel; in this excerpt, we will depict the characters of Munni and Sakina.

Munni

Munni is the character of the novel with whom the readers' sympathies are connected. She is raped by two white soldiers. Amarkant and his friends come to save her. Later Munni kills both those soldiers. And a campaign is launched against her. When the judge sahab declares her murder as a result of mental instability and frees her from punishment, the people present there are overjoyed. Everyone wanted to respect that respectable woman, but Munni was broken from within. She does not go back to her husband and child. After this Munni leaves Kashi and comes to Lucknow. On the train, she meets a couple who have a one-year-old child. In love with the child, she goes to Haridwar with that couple. The lady wrongly blames**,** jumps into the Ganga but Chaudhary Gudar Singh's elder son Sumer saves her. Slowly he starts loving Munni, but when Munni opposes, he starts staying away from her. One day Munni's health deteriorates, and he goes across the Ganga to call the Vaidya and drowns in the Ganga. From then on, Munni starts living there as Chaudhary's elder daughter-in-law. Based on Munni's story in the novel, we see her as an outspoken woman. Her fearlessness, boldness, and self-sacrifice show the path of women's empowerment.

Sakina

Sakina's character does not emerge before the readers in the novel. We find her character only in the context of Amarkant, Salim, and Sukhda. We can consider the traditional beliefs as the reason for her not having an independent existence that she belongs to a lower class Muslim community and due to the absence of her parents, her grandmother is her only support. Her honor is the only capital of her grandmother. In the novel, when Amarkant proposes to her, she also becomes ready to sacrifice everything for him. She is seen opposing social conventions for the first time. She also wants to abandon her grandmother who cares more about society than the happiness of her granddaughter.

Amarkant here also shows his weakness and leaves Sakina. After Amarkant, there was no place for enthusiasm in Sakina's world. She started falling ill, and one-day Sukhda came to meet her. Sukhda had true sympathy for Sakina. After talking to her, Sukhda understands the meaning of love. Sakina also spends her life waiting for Amar and when Salim expresses his desire to marry Sakina, she still asks him to take Amarkant's opinion. Sakina appears before the readers in the novel as a character who not only proves the definition of love meaningful but also gives a new direction to Sukhda and Amarkant's married life.

16.4 Karmbhumi: Socio-economic and Political Conditions of British-occupied India

Premchand's "Karmbhoomi" vividly reflects the socio-economic and political conditions of British-occupied India through its portrayal of rural life and the impact of colonial rule. There are some chief points of current colonial period are given below:

Economic Exploitation

The novel highlights the economic exploitation of peasants by landlords and the colonial government. The British land revenue policies and the zamindari system exacerbated the plight of farmers, leading to severe poverty and indebtedness. Premchand portrays how these policies result in the impoverishment of rural communities and drive them into cycles of debt and economic dependency. It critiques the caste system, depicting how social hierarchies and discrimination affect the lives of lower-caste individuals. The novel shows the ways in which colonial rule intertwines with traditional caste structures to perpetuate social inequality and injustice.

Political Unrest:

The narrative reflects the growing political consciousness among the rural populace and their

involvement in nationalist movements. Characters in the novel are portrayed as being aware of the broader political struggle for independence and are engaged in resisting both colonial oppression and feudal exploitation. The concept of 'karmbhoomi' or the land of one's labor is central to the novel, symbolizing the deep connection between peasants and their land. Premchand explores the struggles of farmers to assert their rights over their land and labor amidst the pressures of colonial exploitation and traditional injustices.

Cultural Tensions

The novel contrasts the forces of modernity brought about by colonial influence with traditional rural values. This tension is evident in the characters' lives as they navigate the pressures of change while trying to preserve their cultural identity. The impact of British economic policies, such as high taxation and exploitation of resources, is depicted through the struggles of the rural populace. Premchand illustrates how these policies lead to economic hardship and social unrest.

Resistance and Reform

The novel also touches upon social reform movements and their impact on rural society. It portrays characters who are inspired by progressive ideas and are involved in efforts to bring about social and economic reforms, reflecting the broader socio-political changes occurring in colonial India.

In short, "Karmbhoomi" offers a nuanced portrayal of the socio-economic and political conditions of British-occupied India, providing insight into the complexities of colonial life and the struggles faced by ordinary people.

16.5 Karmabhumi: Themes of Class Conflict and Resistance against Colonial Exploitation

Premchand's "Karmbhoomi" intricately weaves the themes of class conflict and resistance against colonial exploitation into its narrative. The novel illustrates the exploitation of peasants by landlords and zamindars, who benefit from the British colonial system. These figures extract exorbitant rents from the poor, leading to widespread economic hardship. The disparity between the wealthy landlords and impoverished peasants is a central element of the class conflict depicted in the novel. It portrays how traditional caste hierarchies intersect with class structures under colonial rule. The lower castes, who are often landless laborers or marginal farmers, face systemic exploitation and social discrimination, compounding their economic struggles. This intersection of caste and class issues highlights the depth of social inequality. The novel features peasant characters who resist exploitation and demand their rights. Their resistance against feudal and colonial oppression is a key aspect of the class conflict in the story. The peasants' struggles are depicted through their efforts to challenge the authority of landlords and colonial officials, often leading to tensions and conflicts.

On the surface level, Karmabhoomi seems to be the voice of the marginal farmers, but on the deeper probing we find the novelist portrays all sorts and sections of people are marginalized by each other. Premchand shows that not only farmers, but even landlords, marchants, untouchables, teachers and students have been made voiceless by colonialism. Through these themes, "Karmabhoomi" offers a powerful depiction of class conflict and resistance in colonial India. Premchand's narrative highlights the struggles of the marginalized against both feudal and colonial forces, reflecting the broader socio-political dynamics of the time.

16.6 POST COLONIAL ELEMENTS IN KARMBHUMI

Karmabhumi" (also spelled "Karmabhumi") is a notable work by the Indian writer Premchand, first published in 1932. It is set against the backdrop of early 20th-century India and explores various social, economic, and political issues. Here are some key postcolonial elements in "Karmabhumi":

1. Colonial Exploitation and Economic Disparity

The novel portrays the economic exploitation of Indian peasants under British colonial rule. It highlights the disparities between the wealthy landlords and the impoverished farmers, reflecting the broader economic injustices imposed by colonialism.

2. Cultural and Social Tensions

"Karmabhumi" addresses the cultural and social tensions arising from colonial rule, such as the conflicts between traditional Indian values and the modernizing influences of Western education and ideas. This tension is evident in the characters' struggles with cultural identity and social change. The protagonist Amarkant being attract to Sakina, the watchman's grand-daughter shows the wind of change but his father rejecting the relation with muslim reflects cultural clash.

3. Nationalism and Anti-Colonial Sentiments

The novel reflects the growing sense of nationalism and the desire for political and social reform in colonial India. Characters in "Karmabhumi" are involved in social and political activism, which parallels the broader anti-colonial movements of the time. The depiction of British colonial officials and their interaction with Indian society provides insight into the power dynamics and administrative structures of the colonial regime. The novel critiques the inefficiencies and injustices of the colonial administration.

4. Impact on Rural Life

The novel highlights how colonial policies adversely affect rural life, including the imposition of taxes and the neglect of agricultural needs. This reflects the broader impact of colonialism on the agrarian economy and rural communities. The exorbitant land tax on the poor untouchables against which Amarkant stand up shows Munshi Premchand's concern for colonial exploitation.

5. Identity and Cultural Conflict

Characters in "Karmabhumi" grapple with issues of identity and cultural conflict as they navigate the pressures of colonial rule. The novel examines how colonialism influences personal and collective identity, leading to a crisis of cultural and social values.

6. Social Reform and Resistance

The characters' involvement in social reform movements, such as advocating for education and challenging outdated practices, reflects the broader resistance against colonial and traditional constraints. The novel portrays the efforts of reformers who seek to address social inequities and injustices. The protagonist Amarkant setting in a village of untouchables, teaching their children and helping the villagers in their fight for tax relief shows Premchand message of removing social inequality.

7. Critique of Feudalism

Premchand critiques the feudal structures that existed within Indian society, which were exacerbated by colonial rule. The novel explores how feudal practices contribute to social inequality and how they are challenged by progressive characters. Sukhda ultimately is drawn into the movement for getting temple rights to the untouchable.

In short, "Karmabhumi" serves as a significant literary work that engages with various postcolonial themes, providing a critique of colonial and feudal systems while exploring the complexities of social and cultural change in early 20th-century India.

16.7 LET'S SUM UP

In this Unit we have focused on colonial and feudal impact on common or marginalized people. We have also seen how the forces of it pose new threats in an unequal world order. We have given you:

- a detailed introduction to feudal system in colonial period.
- description of the social reason in its development;
- a complete detail of the feudal system.
- an outline of chief characteristics of postcolonial literature .
- a brief guideline on how to read a literary discipline.

16.4(A) QUESTIONS

1. How does Premchand's "Karmbhoomi" reflect the socio-economic and political conditions of British-occupied India?
2. In what ways does "Karmbhoomi" critique the traditional caste system and its intersection with colonial rule.
3. How does Premchand use his characters and plot in "Karmbhoomi" to explore the tension between modernity and tradition in the context of colonial India?
4. What role do gender dynamics play in "Karmbhoomi," and how does Premchand address issues of patriarchy and female agency within the framework of colonial and postcolonial discourse?
5. How does Premchand's portrayal of the peasant struggles in "Karmbhoomi" contribute to the understanding of class conflict and resistance against colonial exploitation, and what are the implications of this portrayal for postcolonial literary studies?
6. In "Karmbhoomi," how does Premchand's depiction of the political and social reforms in colonial India reflect broader postcolonial themes of resistance and adaptation?
7. How does Premchand address the concept of 'karmbhoomi' (the land of one's labor) in the novel,?
8. What are the similarities and differences in how Premchand's "Karmbhoomi" and other postcolonial texts approach the theme of nationalism and the struggle for independence from colonial rule?
9. How does "Karmbhoomi" represent the relationship between urban and rural spaces under colonial rule ?
10. In what ways does Premchand depict the social and economic inequalities in "Karmbhoomi?

(B) Short Answer Type Question

1. How does "Karmbhoomi" address the impact of British colonialism on rural India?

Answer: "Karmbhoomi" depicts the economic hardships and social injustices faced by rural communities under British rule, illustrating how colonial policies exacerbate the exploitation of peasants and deepen class inequalities.

2. What is the significance of the caste system in "Karmbhoomi"?

Answer: The novel critiques the caste system by highlighting the exploitation and marginalization of lower castes, showing how colonial and traditional structures intersect to perpetuate social injustices.

3. How does Premchand portray the conflict between tradition and modernity in the novel?

Answer: Premchand contrasts traditional values with modern reforms, illustrating the struggles of characters who are caught between maintaining cultural traditions and embracing social progress, reflecting broader societal shifts during the colonial period.

4. What role do gender issues play in "Karmbhoomi"?

Answer: Gender issues are central to the narrative, with Premchand addressing women's struggles for agency and rights within both traditional and colonial contexts, highlighting patriarchal constraints and female resistance.

5. How are peasant struggles depicted in "Karmbhoomi"?

Answer: The novel portrays peasant struggles against feudal exploitation and colonial oppression, emphasizing their resistance and the socio-political challenges they face in their fight for justice.

6. What does "Karmbhoomi" reveal about nationalism and independence?

Answer: "Karmbhoomi" reflects the growing nationalist sentiment and the quest for independence, depicting characters' political awakening and their desire for self-determination in the face of colonial rule.

7. How does Premchand use the concept of 'karmbhoomi' in the novel?

Answer: The concept of 'karmbhoomi' (land of one's labor) symbolizes the connection between people and their land, emphasizing the importance of land for identity and livelihood, and critiquing colonial exploitation of rural areas.

8. What is the relationship between urban and rural settings in "Karmbhoomi"?

Answer: The novel contrasts urban and rural settings to highlight the disparities between the two, showing how colonial policies impact rural areas differently from urban centers, and reflecting on the uneven development.

9. How does "Karmbhoomi" critique both colonial and traditional structures?

Answer: "Karmbhoomi" critiques colonial structures by exposing their role in perpetuating social and economic injustices, while also challenging traditional social norms that contribute to inequality, advocating for reform and justice.

10. What themes in "Karmbhoomi" align with postcolonial discourse?

Answer: Themes such as resistance to oppression, the critique of colonial exploitation, the struggle for social justice, and the re-evaluation of traditional practices align with postcolonial discourse, reflecting the complexities of colonial and postcolonial identities.

16.5 FURTHER READINGS

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