



SRINIVASAN COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE



(Affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Trichy)

PERAMBALUR-621212

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Course: II B.A.

Year: II

Semester: IV

Course material on : History of English Literature II

Course code : Allied Course -IV (AC)

Sub Code (BDU given): 16AACEN4

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Month & Year: March 2020

HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE II

Objectives: To expose learners to the historical background of the literary texts from the Age of Pope to the Present Age To make learners understand the rise and fall of literary movements and their relationships to socio-political and socio-religious events.

Unit – I Chapters XIII & XIV : The Age of Pope

Unit – II Chapters XV to XVII : The Age of Johnson

Unit – III Chapters XVIII to XXI : The Age of Wordsworth

Unit – IV Chapters XXII to XXIV : The Age of Tennyson

Unit – V Chapters XXV & XXVI : The Age of Hardy and the Present Age

UNIT 1

AGE OF POPE (1700-1745)

The earlier part of the eighteenth century or the Augustan Age in English literature is called the Age of Pope, because Pope was the dominating figure in that period. Though there were a number of other important writers like Addison and Swift, but Pope was the only one who devoted himself completely to literature. Moreover, he represented in himself all the main characteristics of his age, and his poetry served as a model to others.

(a) Poetry:

It was the Classical school of poetry which dominated the poetry of the Age of Pope. During this age the people were disgusted with the profligacy and frivolity of the Restoration period, and they insisted upon those elementary decencies of life and conduct which were looked at with contempt by the preceding generation. Moreover, they had no sympathy for the fanaticism and religious zeal of the Puritans who were out to ban even the most innocent means of recreation. So they wanted to follow the middle path in everything and steer clear of the emotional as well as moral excesses. They insisted on the role of intelligence in everything. The poets of this period are deficient on the side of emotion and imagination. Dominated by intellect, poetry of this age is commonly didactic and satirical, a poetry of argument and criticism, of politics and personalities.

In the second place, the poets of this age are more interested in the town, and the 'cultural' society. They have no sympathy for the humbler aspects of life—the life of the villagers, the shepherds; and no love for nature, the beautiful flowers, the songs of birds, and landscape as we find in the poets of the Romantic period. Though they preached a virtuous life, they would not display any feeling which smacked of enthusiasm and earnestness. Naturally they had no regard for the great poets of the human heart—Chaucer, Shakespeare and Milton. They had no attachment for the Middle Ages and their tales of chivalry, adventure and visionary idealism. Spenser, therefore, did not find favour with them.

In the poetry of this age, form became more important than substance. This love of superficial polish led to the establishment of a highly artificial and conventional style. The closed couplet became the only possible form for serious work in verse. Naturally poetry became monotonous, because the couplet was too narrow and inflexible to be made the vehicle of high passion and strong imagination. Moreover, as great emphasis was laid on the

imitation of ancient writers, originality was discouraged, and poetry lost touch with the real life of the people.

Prose being the prominent medium of expression, the rules of exactness, precision and clarity, which were insisted in the writing of prose, also began to be applied to poetry. It was demanded of the poet to say all that he had to say in a plain simple and clear language. The result was that the quality of suggestiveness which adds so much to the beauty and worth of poetry was sadly lacking in the poetry of this age. The meaning of poetry was all on the surface, and there was nothing which required deep study and varied interpretation.

Alexandar Pope (1688-1744).

Pope is considered as the greatest poet of the Classical period. He is 'prince of classicism' as Prof. Etton calls him. He was an invalid, of small stature and delicate constitution, whose bad nerves and cruel headaches made his life, in his own phrase, a 'long disease'. Moreover, being a Catholic he had to labour under various restrictions. But the wonder is that in spite of his manifold handicaps, this small, ugly man has left a permanent mark on the literature of his age. He was highly intellectual, extremely ambitious and capable of tremendous industry. These qualities brought him to the front rank of men of letters, and during his lifetime he was looked upon as a model poet.

The main quality of Pope's poetry is its correctness. It was at the age of twenty-three that he published his *Essay on Criticism* (1711) and since then till the end of his life he enjoyed prodigious reputation. In this essay Pope insists on following the rules discovered by the Ancients, because they are in harmony with Nature:

Those rules of old discovered, not devised

Are Nature still, but Nature methodised.

Pope's next work, *The Rape of the Lock*, is in some ways his masterpiece. It is 'mock heroic' poem in which he celebrated the theme of the stealth, by Lord Petre of lock of hair from the head of Miss Arabella. Though the poem is written in a jest and deals with a very insignificant event, it is given the form of an epic, investing this frivolous event with mock seriousness and dignity.

By this time Pope had perfected the heroic couplet, and he made use of his technical skill in translating Homer's *Illiad* and *Odyssey* which meant eleven years' very hard work.

The reputation which Pope now enjoyed created a host of jealous rivals whom he severely criticised and ridiculed in *The Dunciad*. This is Pope's greatest satire in which he attacked all sorts of literary incompetence. It is full of cruel and insulting couplets on his enemies. His next great poem was *The Essay on Man* (1732-34), which is full of brilliant oft-quoted passages and lines. His later works—*Imitations of Horace* and *Epistle*—are also satires and contain biting attacks on his enemies.

Though Pope enjoyed a tremendous reputation during his lifetime and for some decades after his death, he was so bitterly attacked during the nineteenth century that it was doubted whether Pope was a poet at all. But in the twentieth century this reaction subsided, and now it is admitted by great critics that though much that Pope wrote is prosaic, not of a very high order, yet a part of his poetry is undoubtedly indestructible. He is the supreme master of the epigrammatic style, of condensing an idea into a line or couplet. Of course, the thoughts in his poetry are commonplace, but they are given the most appropriate and perfect expression. The result is that many of them have become proverbial sayings in the English language. For example:

Who shall decide when doctors disagree?

Thou wert my guide, philosopher, and friend.

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;

The proper study of mankind is man.

Hope springs eternal in the human breast;

Man never is, but always to be, blest.

Minor Poets of the Age of Pope:

During his age Pope was by far the greatest of all poets. There were a few minor poets—Matthew Prior, John Gay, Edward Young, Thomas Parnell and Lady Winchelsea.

Matthew Prior (1664-1721), who was a diplomat and active politician wrote two long poems: *Solomon on the Vanity of The World* and *Alma or the Progress of the Mind*. These are serious poems, but the reputation of Prior rests on 'light verse' dealing with trifling matters. He is not merely a light-hearted jester, but a true humanist, with sense of tears as well as laughter as is seen in the "Lines written in the beginning of Mezeray's History of France".

John Gay (1685-1732) is the master of vivid description of rural scenes as well of the delights of the town. Like Prior he is full of humour and good temper. As a writer of lyrics, and in the handling of the couplet, he shows considerable technical skill. His best-known works are: —Rural Sports; Trivia, or the Art of Walking the Streets of London; Black-Eyed Susan and some Fables.

Prior and Gay were the followers of Pope, and after Pope, they are the two excellent guides to the life of eighteenth century London. The other minor poets, Edward Young, Thomas Parnell and Lady Winchelsea, belonged more to the new Romantic spirit than to the classical spirit in their treatment of external nature, though they were unconscious of it.

Edward Young (1683-1765) in his *Universal Passions* showed himself as skilful a satirist as Pope. His best-known work is *The Night Thoughts* which, written in blank verse, shows considerable technical skill and deep thought.

Thomas Parnell (1679-1718) excelled in translations. His best known works are the *The Night-Piece on Death* and *Hymn to Contentment*, which have a freshness of outlook and metrical skill.

Lady Winchelsea (1660-1725), though a follower of Pope, showed more sincerity and genuine feeling for nature than any other poet of that age. Her *Nocturnal Reverie* may be considered as the pioneer of the nature poetry of the new Romantic age.

To sum up, the poetry of the age of Pope is not of a high order, but it has distinct merits—the finished art of its satires; the creation of a technically beautiful verse; and the clarity and succinctness of its expression.

(b) Prose of the Age of Pope:

The great prose writers of the Age of Pope were Defoe, Addison, Steele and Swift. The prose of this period exhibits the Classical qualities—clearness, vigour and direct statement.

Daniel Defoe (1661-1731) is the earliest literary journalist in the English language. He wrote on all sorts of subjects—social, political, literary, and brought out about 250 publications. He owes his importance, in literature, however, mainly to his works of fiction which were simply the offshoots of his general journalistic enterprises. As a journalist he was fond of writing about the lives of famous people who had just died, and of notorious

adventurers and criminals. At the age of sixty he turned his attention to the writing of prose fiction, and published his first novel—Robinson Cruso—the book by which he is universally known. It was followed by other works of fiction—The Memoirs of a Cavalier, Captain Singleton, Moll Flanders, Colonel Jack, Roxana and Journal of the Plague Year.

In these works of fiction Defoe gave his stories an air of reality and convinced his readers of their authenticity. That is why they are appropriately called by Sir Leslie Stephen as ‘Fictitious biographies’ or ‘History minus the Facts’. All Defoe’s fictions are written in the biographical form. They follow no system and are narrated in a haphazard manner which give them a semblance of reality and truth. His stories, told in the plain, matter-of-fact, business-like way, appropriate to stories of actual life, hence they possess extraordinary minute realism which is their distinct feature. Here his homely and colloquial style came to his help. On account of all these qualities Defoe is credited with being the originator of the English novel. As a writer of prose his gift of narrative and description is masterly. As he never wrote with any deliberate artistic intention, he developed a natural style which made him one of the masters of English prose.

Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) was the most powerful and original genius of his age. He was highly intellectual but on account of some radical disorder in his system and the repeated failures which he had to face in the realisation of his ambition to rise in public life, made him a bitter, melancholy and sardonic figure. He took delight in flouting conventions, and undermining the reputation of his apponents. His best-known work, Gulliver’s Travels, which is a very popular children’s book, is also a bitter attack on contemporary political and social life in particular, and on the meanness and littleness of man in general. The Tale of a Tub which, like Gulliver’s Travels, is written in the form of an allegory, and exposes the weakness of the main religious beliefs opposed to Protestant religion, is also a satire upon all science and philosophy. His Journal to Stella which was written to Esther Johnson whom Swift loved, is not only an excellent commentary on contemporary characters and political events, by one of the most powerful and original minds of the age, but in love passages, and purely personal descriptions, it reveals the real tenderness which lay concealed in the depths of his fierce and domineering nature.

Swift was a profound pessimist. He was essentially a man of his time in his want of spiritual quality, in his distrust of the visionary and the extravagant, and in his thoroughly materialistic view of life. As a master of prose-style, which is simple, direct and colloquial,

and free from the ornate and rhetorical elements, Swift has few rivals in the whole range of English literature. As a satirist his greatest and most effective weapon is irony. Though apparently supporting a cause which he is really opposing, he pours ridicule upon ridicule on it until its very foundations are shaken. The finest example, of irony is to be found in his pamphlet—The Battle of Books, in which he championed the cause of the Ancients against the Moderns. The mock heroic description of the great battle in the King's Library between the rival hosts is a masterpiece of its kind.

Joseph Addison (1672-1719) and Sir Richard Steele (1672-1729) who worked in collaboration, were the originators of the periodical essay. Steele who was more original led the way by founding The Tatler, the first of the long line of eighteenth century periodical essays. This was followed by the most famous of them The Spectator, in which Addison, who had formerly contributed to Steele's Tatler, now became the chief partner. It began on March 1, 1711, and ran till December 20, 1714 with a break of about eighteen months. In its complete form it contains 635 essays. Of these Addison wrote 274 and Steele 240; the remaining 121 were contributed by various friends.

The Characters of Steele and Addison were curiously contrasted. Steele was an emotional, full-blooded kind of man, reckless and dissipated but fundamentally honest and good-hearted. What there is of pathos and sentiment, and most of what there is of humour in the Tatler and the Spectator are his. Addison, on the other hand, was an urbane, polished gentleman of exquisite refinement of taste. He was shy, austere, pious and righteous. He was a quiet and accurate observer of manners of fashions in life and conversation.

The purpose of the writings of Steele and Addison was ethical. They tried to reform society through the medium of the periodical essay. They set themselves as moralistic to break down two opposed influences—that of the profligate Restoration tradition of loose living and loose thinking on the one hand, and that of Puritan fanaticism and bigotry on the other. They performed this work in a gentle, good-humoured manner, and not by bitter invective. They made the people laugh at their own follies and thus get rid of them. So they were, to a great extent, responsible for reforming the conduct of their contemporaries in social and domestic fields. Their aim was moral as well as educational. Thus they discussed in a light-hearted and attractive manner art, philosophy, drama, poetry, and in so doing guided and developed the taste of the people. For example, it was by his series of eighteen

articles on *Paradise Lost*, that Addison helped the English readers have a better appreciation of Milton and his work.

In another direction the work of Addison and Steele proved of much use. Their character studies in the shape of the members of the Spectator Club—Sir Roger de Coverley and others—presented actual men moving amid real scenes and taking part in various incidents and this helped in the development of genuine novel.

Both Steele and Addison were great masters of prose. Their essays are remarkable as showing the growing perfection of the English language. Of the two, Addison was a greater master of the language. He cultivated a highly cultured and graceful style—a style which can serve as a model. Dr. Johnson very aptly remarked: “Whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison.” And again he said: “Give nights and days, Sir, to the study of Addison if you mean to be a good writer, or what is more worth, an honest man.”

Why did Alexander Pope enjoy writing satire?

He used poetry as a great instrument of moral improvement and believed that satire was his most effective weapon to destroy corrupt customs and to expose the wicked. John Dennis in his monumental book, *The Age of Pope* remarks “It is a satirist that Pope, with one exception, excels all English poets.”

What is new classical age?

The 18th century in English literature has been called the neo-classical age, Augustan age and the age of reason.

Why is it called neoclassical?

The period is called neoclassical because its writers looked back to the ideals and art forms of classical times, emphasizing even more than their Renaissance predecessors the classical ideals of order and rational control.

Why did Defoe write *Robinson Crusoe*?

Defoe began writing fiction late in life, around the age of sixty. He published his first novel, *Robinson Crusoe*, in 1719, attracting a large middle-class readership. ... With *Robinson Crusoe*'s theme of solitary human existence, Defoe paved the way for the central modern theme of alienation and isolation.

UNIT 2

AGE OF JOHNSON (1745- 1798)

General prose:

In the period of Dr. Johnson, profound changes are taking place in the spirit of English society. People of age wanted something more natural and spontaneous in thought and language. People were quickened into fresh activity by the renaissance of the feelings. This IS an Important fact in the history of this period of transition. The emotions, long repressed, were reinstated. We see this in the Case of religion. In Pope's time, contemporary society, had been unspiritual. In the great evangelistic revival led by Wesley and Whitefield, the old formality was swept away and a mighty tide of spiritual energy poured into the church and among the masses of the people. The evangelists made their appeal directly to the emotional nature. Handel's "Messiah" foretold the coming change. The spread of the humanitarian spirit quickens the rapid growth of democracy. People were familiar with the notions of liberty equality and the rights of man. French writer Rousseau's slogan 'Back to Nature' sent a strange thrill through the whole European World. There is Revolution in Literature too. There was a steady triumph of the new. It marked out the main lines of its evolution.

Dr. Johnson:

He was the greatest English man of letters between Pope and Wordsworth. He was born in Lichfield in 1709. His father was a book seller. He was always sick. He was a pessimist. He did some translation for a Birmingham publisher. He married a widow twenty years elder to him. He had a compamon by name David Garrick, who was the greatest actor of his time. During the first few years, he produced. The Vanity of Human Wishes (1749) and a tragedy called Irene (1749), About 1090 papers were contributed to 'The Idler" (1758 to 1760). "The periodical Rambler" appeared on Tuesdays and Saturdays.

A significant development in the later half of the 18th century was the creation of the "Magazine". It was an anthology of interesting and significant material which had already appeared in recent newspapers and periodicals. One such magazine was Edward Cave's monthly "The Gentleman's Magazine", "The Magazine" was in course of time more and more devoted to the criticism of books. Dr. Johnson had the scholar's pride as well as the scholar's accuracy. He wanted to say, what he had to say, in the best possible words. He wanted to

convey his meaning exactly and correctly to his readers. An inexact word never escapes. Sincerity becomes the leading feature of his writing. Leslie Stephen points out, "he wanted to keep his style above the "grossness" of common style above the "grossness" of common talk; he never wrote 'below refer cement" John Bailey points out, "he influenced even men so great as Gibbon and young Ruskin, and women so brilliant as Fanny Burney".

Dr. Johnson was occupied for eight years by an immense task "A Dictionary of English Language". In his dictionary, he not only defined the words but also illustrate his definitions by quotations taken from the whole range of English Literature. His work laid foundation for English lexicography, "The Dictionary" made him independent. He received a pension of £ 300 a year. He became the acknowledged Dictator. Smollett called him, "The Great charm' of literature. In his club, he was surrounded by Goldsmith, Sir Joshua Reynolds the great painter, Bukr, Garrick and Boswell. He published his didactic tale, Rasselas in 1759, an edition of Shakespeare in 1765. and account of his four to the Bebrides with Boswell under the title of "Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland in 1775. He died in 1784 and was burned in Westminster abbey.

Macaulay said, "The memory of other authors is kept alive by their works but the memory of Johnson keeps many of his works alive. He lives in the pages of his biography by his hero-worshipping friend, James Boswell. He was great both as a critic of literature and as a critic of life. "Life", he declared, "is progress from want to want, not from enjoyment to enjoyment. Throughout his life he made a most heroic fight against the melancholy which was the cause of his ill-health. The steady courage of hrs manhood pervades his work. The essence of his teaching is that we should face the facts or existence honestly. "The Vanity of Himan Wishes and Rassales show that he was he was saved from utter hopelessness by his strong religious faith. As a prose writer, Dr. Johnson is known for his "Preface to his Dictionary". His style, though vigorous and direct, is too heavy and learned and is called 'Johnsonese". He used big words which require the mouth of a giant to pronounce them. Goldsmith once remarked, "If you were to make little fishes talk, they would talk like whales". His works have great strength, nobility and dignity.

The Novel:

Prose fiction in England before Richardson : The novels firm establishment and popularity date from the age of Johnson. Novel was the greatest achievement of that age. It was with Richardson that prose fiction passed definitely into its modern form. Most of this

fiction were purely romantic like the works of Sidney, Lodge and Greene: or didactic like the works of More Lyly and Bacon. Realism had been shown in the work of Nash. French fashions were seen in English soil, Aphra Behn and several other women writers began to cultivate a form of story which was marked by brevity.

Historical Significance of the Novel : A new form of literary art-the novel a sign that literature offered a fresh field in which modern writers were able to work independently In the first place the popularity of the novel depended upon the growth of the reading public in which women were becoming increasingly numerous, secondly the novel was a sign that literature was beginning to outgrow the cramping limitations of classicism.

Richardson :

Samuel Richardson 1689-1761 sometimes referred to as the father of the English novel was a printer. He became a novelist at the age of fifty. He began his career as a novelist with the publication of his 'Pamela'. He regarded it as a new species of writing. His aim was to turn young people away from the pomp and parade and promote the cause of religion and virtue". Pamela and Clarissa are models of feminine virtue. While Sir Charles Grandison represents masculine virtue, the method of telling his stories, is by way of letters. A letter is of the nature of soliloquy is the great engine for self-revelation and analysis. As letters are written at the very moment of excitement, we see the character to its very core, in its true colours. This method has a number of advantages.

Richardson owes his place in the history of the novel. His novels are of minute analysis. He lays bare the very heart and soul of his characters. No detail escapes his eye or is below his attention. It is the exact function of the microscope. The novel Pamela tells of a young girl, a lady's maid, who has been tortured by the Son of her mistress. The girl resists all his arts and tricks until at length his heart being softened towards her he makes her his wife. As Saintsbury puts it "Every flutter of Pamela's heart is faithfully registered" Johnson was right in praising him "for his knowledge of the human heart". His Successful novel is or the adventures of a young lady generally known as Clarissa Harlowe and Sir. Charles Grandison. Clarissa is Richardson's masterpiece. It gave him a European reputation It is regarded as one of the greatest of 18th century novels, it also contain. Richardson most remarkable character study of the scoundrel Love Lace, whose name became proverbial.

He enlarged the knowledge of human nature through his minute Psycho — analysis of his characters. His dialogues are much more important and have the animation and liveliness of real conversation. Never had there been such dialogue before in English fiction. His genius was rather feminine than masculine. His epistolary method has its advantages in bringing us into intimate touch with the writers themselves.

Fielding :

Henry Fielding was one of the greatest of the 18th century novelists. He was a man of very different type. He had wide knowledge of life. It was Sir Walter Scott who called him "The father of the English novel" for some ten years before he took up the novel he had been busy writing plays and this long training in the drama had taught him many valuable lessons in the art of construction. His novels are novels of sentiment. There is much minute Psycho-analysis. His works exhibit all the essential features of a successful novel. He revolutionized the concept of plot construction. It is from Fielding that we get for the first time a closely knit organic plot Fielding is certainly the father of the novel of character. He peopled the novel with a great crowd of lively and interesting characters and endowed them with life and vitality.

Hazlitt points out "He has brought together a greater variety of character from common life marked with more distinct peculiarities and without an atom of caricature. Fielding presents the picture of contemporary life society dress habits and manners in his novels, Every aspect of contemporary life has been presented with rare force and realism and this makes "Tom Jones" and important social document. Here Fielding takes an enormous canvas and crowds in with figures. His hero is a foundling who is brought up in the west of England by a squire named Allworthy. The novel gives the richest picture of English life. Fielding's third great novel 'Amelia' appeared in 1751. In this novel the interest centres in the character of a woman. The novel 'Clarissa' tells of the courage and patience of a devoted wife and of the ill-doings of her weak willed husband.

Fielding's realism marks a significant advance in the history of the English novel. He went to "The Doom's Day Book of Nature" for his subject and reproduce it faithfully and accurately. He was the first English Novelist to localize his scene. He always makes the setting recognizable. Fielding was the first to infuse the novel with an element of humour. Hypocrisy and vice are the object of his satire. Fielding imparted to the novel the dignity and attraction of pure literature. He is the first theorist of the English novel. Through his theory of

"The comic epic in prose" Fielding secured dignity and recognition for the novel. Incidental comments scattered all through "Joseph Andrews" and "Tom Jones". They reveal the richness of his brain and thought. They make the novel a social type by bringing the readers into contact with the rich social circle of Fielding's friends. To him the novel was quite as much a form of art as the epic or the drama.

Smollet:

Tobias Smollett 1721-1771 can be ranked with Richardson and Fielding in the history of the 18th century novel. In early life Smollett spent some years as surgeon on a man-of-war and gained knowledge of sea and sailors. He settled in London. Medicine failing he turned to literature. The success of Richardson and Fielding prompted him to try his hand in fiction and he wrote half-a-dozen novels. The chief among them are (1) Roderick Random 1748 (2) Peregrine Pickle (1751) and (3) The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker (1771). Smollett conceived the novel as 'a large diffused picture of life'. His stories are simply strings of adventures and Unity is given to them only by the personality of the hero. His aim is to keep the readers interest alive by a succession of incidents. His fertility of invention and animation are remarkable, Smollett's novel method is a return to the picaresque tradition.

A picaresque novel is a Union of intrigue and adventure and Unity is provided by the central figure. He is a novelist of Sea-life. In his novels we get the real sea, a real ship, a real voyage and the real English Sailors. His descriptions of Sea-life in his novels are vivid and realistic. His Sea-dogs are unforgettable figures in literature. His familiarity with sea-life enabled him to capture the very idiom of Sea-language. Ship scenes in Roderick Random led to drastic changes for the better in the condition of the novel service. Peregrine Pickle is a great sea novel. It is remarkable for its sparkling wit. As Saintsbury puts it 'Peregrine Pickle' can never be thrown to the wolves. English literature cannot do without it.

Fierce satire is one of the leading characteristics of Smollett's novels. As Cross points out, he crowds his pages with well-known characters of his own time, usually for the purpose of fierce satire." He is Swift without Swift's clean and wide vision. "Humphrey Clinker" is his masterpiece. The letter plan which Smollett has used for this novel, enables him to supply deficiency in characterization Characters in "Humphrey Clinker" come to life through the letters which they receive from and write to each other. Exaggeration or caricature is the very essence Of Smollett's art. Continuous laughter is excited through various situations, His novel is remarkable for its detailed descriptions of interior furniture decoration and accessories.

Smollett has widened the scope of the English novel. He widened the appeal of the novel and imparted to it immense variety by describing the life and manners of different countries. As a Panoramic novelist, Smollett has never been surpassed. Smollett is a caricaturist. Men in his novels constantly turn to insect or animals. Smollett is a satirist and reformer. His aim is to paint the monstrous evils in life in their true proportions and colours. He did his best to enlarge the scope of fiction. He was the first novelist to exploit the national peculiarities of Irish Scotch and Welsh.

Other novelists of the period :

Goldsmith was ahead of most of the novelists of his time. Rev. Lawrence Sterne wrote "Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy" and "Gentleman" which appeared in 9 volumes from 1759 to 1767. He owes his rank as novelist to the wonderful power of his character-drawing in the elder Shandy and his wife corporal Trim and Uncle Toby. They are living figures in 18th century fiction. Henry Mackenzie wrote "The man of feeling". It is one of the dampest books in English literature. William Godwin wrote "Caleb Williams" or "Things as They are Francis Burney laid the real foundation of the women's novel She wrote "Evelina" or —The History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World" Johnson called her "little fanny- (24 Yrs) She was the founder of the tea-table school of fiction Her 2nd book is "Cecilia"

The Revival of Romance :

In the revival of romance the letter writer Horace Walpole should be mentioned. He took up medievalism. He bought a small house or villakin, near Twickenham and transformed it into a miniature Gothic castle. He installed with great satisfaction his collection of curiosities, art, treasures and stilts of armour and the statue which bleeds at the nose. Byron called the novel "The first romance in the language". Clara Reeve's "Old English" is a Gothic story. Ann Radcliffe wrote "Romance of the Forest". "The mysteries of Udolpho and the "Italian". Mathew Gregory Lewis wrote "Ambrosio" or 'The Monk'. The novelists, in the age of Johnson, returned to the romantic middle ages.

Verse:

General Characteristics:

The history of our late 18th century poetry is the history of a struggle between old and new. The Age of Johnson in respect of its poetry is an age of modernism, transition, and innovation. Classical poetry was the product of the intelligence and was deficient in emotion and imagination.

It was town poetry.

It was lacking romantic spirit.

It was formal and artificial in style.

It has close couplet.

On the other hand...

Romantic spirit led to the growth of the sense of picturesque.

The Romantic spirit received and this revival brought with it great changes in the temper of verse.

Efforts were taken to introduce simple phrases and the language of nature.

Instead of close couplet, other forms of verse were used.

The Continuance of the Augustan Tradition:

Both Johnson and Goldsmith were strong conservatives in literary theory. In an epoch of change, they held fast to the immediate past. Goldsmith was equally convinced that "the writers of the Augustan age provided the true standard for future limitation". Johnson's two chief poems "London" and "The Vanity of the Human Wishes" belong to the past generation. Goldsmith's two important poems "The Traveler" and "The Deserted Village" are didactic and written in the closed couplet.

The Reaction in Form:

The main feature of the reaction in style was the abandonment of the Popean couplet, in other kinds of verse. Growing admiration of Milton was the immediate cause of the rise and spreading popularity of blank verse. Johnson's "Seasons" was the first important piece of 18th century. Somerville's "The Chase" Young's "Night Thoughts" Blair's "The Grave"

Dyer's "The Ruins of Rome" and Akenside's "The Pleasure of the Imagination" were written in blank verse, "The School Mistress" of William Shenstone was the language and style Of Spencer Johnson's "Castle of Indolence" adopts the Gothic machinery of the "Faery Queene"

The Growth of the Love of nature in 18th century poetry:

The growth of a love of nature and of a feeling for the picturesque is one of the most marked features in the history of English poetry between Pope and Wordsworth. Thomas Parnell and Lady Coinchilsea show a genuine sense of natural beauty and the charms of rural life. The Muse of the time voiced best to frequent the coffee-house and the drawing room. It was in the writings of Lamarkshire Man, Allan Ramsay (1689-1758) that the reviving love of nature became clear. In "The Gentle Shepherd" (1725) which is a real pastoral poem the characters are genuine shepherds and shepherdesses. John Dyer 1700- 1758) a Welshman's "Grongar Hill" is a piece of vigorous landscape painting. The love of nature became prominent in poetry.

The Development of Naturalism:

The steady growth of a love of nature and slogan "return to nature" provide the increasing feeling of the picturesque and the charms of the country. Stress was laid upon to bring poetry back to nature and reality. William Blake was a mystic and a visionary. He could be ranked along with romantic poets. His "Songs of Innocence" and "Songs of Experience" expressed the love of the country and marked him out as a leader in the naturalistic kind of poetry. George Crabbe wrote "The Village" "The Newspaper" "The Parish Register" "The Borough" and "The Tales of the Hall". Crabbe was not influenced by romantic movement.

The Romantic Movement:

By romantic, we connote the principle of spontaneity in literature. It means the assertion of individuality against the conventions of the schools. Romanticism was a part of 18th century movement for the emancipation of the individual. The great French writer Victor Hugo described it as "liberalism in literature". Mr. Watts-Dunton defined romantic revival as "the renaissance of wonder and mystery". Keats' "Endymion" is romantic and Thomas Gray's "Elegy" is romantic melancholy. Richards Hurd (1720-1808) in his "Letters on Chivalry and Romance" maintained "Gothic manners" for poetry. The most important ballad book of the 18th century was Bishop Percy's "The Reliques of Ancient English Poetry". It helped a lot in

spreading romantic tastes. "An Essay on the Ancient Minstrels" was the immediate inspiration of Thomas Chatterton. "The Marvelous Boy" was spoken of in the history of the medieval revival.

He died before he had completed his 18th year. Thomas Rowley is a mythical Bristol priest of the 15th century. Macpherson's 'Ossianic' poems are filled with supernaturalism steeped in melancholy. The desire to get back to nature is good feature of these poems. They captivated readers of all classes, touched their sympathy, set their hearts a flame. The revival of the romantic past came to its head between 1760 and 1770. To this decade belong Hurd's "Letters on Chivalry and Romance" "The Castle of Otranto" and Percy's "Reliques".

What is the age of sensibility?

The Age of Johnson, often referred to as The Age of Sensibility, is the period in English. poets William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. faith and superstition, to enlighten others, and led to the expansion of many social, economic, and cultural areas including astronomy, politics, and medicine.

Who are the poets of the age of Johnson?

The poets who showed romantic leanings, during the Age of Johnson, and who may be described as the precursors or harbingers of the Romantic Revival were James Thomson, Thomas Gray, William Collins, James Macpherson, William Blake, Robert Burns, William Cowper and George Crabbe.

How was the Age of Johnson called?

The Age of Johnson was clearly an Age of Transition.

What does Richardson's first novel tell?

Richardson first novel Pamela tells the story of the trials, tribulations and final happy marriage of the heroine, Pamela in the form of letters appeared.

Who created romanticism?

The term itself was coined in the 1840s, in England, but the movement had been around since the late 18th century, primarily in Literature and Arts. In England, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, and Byron typified Romanticism. In France, the movement was led by men like Victor Hugo, who wrote the Hunchback of Notre Dame.

What was the Augustan age called?

The eighteenth century in English literature has been called the Augustan Age, the Neoclassical Age, and the Age of Reason. The term 'the Augustan Age' comes from the self-conscious imitation of the original Augustan writers, Virgil and Horace, by many of the writers of the period.

What is new classical age?

The 18th century in English literature has been called the neo-classical age, Augustan age and the age of reason. □ The term “the Augustan age” comes from the self-conscious imitation of the original Augustan writers, Virgil and Horace by many of the writers of the period.

UNIT – 3

ROMANTIC MOVEMENT (1798-1832)

The nature of Romanticism:

As a term to cover the most distinctive writers who flourished in the last years of the 18th century and the first decades of the 19th, “Romantic” is indispensable but also a little misleading: there was no self-styled “Romantic movement” at the time, and the great writers of the period did not call themselves Romantics. Not until August Wilhelm von Schlegel’s Vienna lectures of 1808–09 was a clear distinction established between the “organic,” “plastic” qualities of Romantic art and the “mechanical” character of Classicism.

Many of the age’s foremost writers thought that something new was happening in the world’s affairs, nevertheless. William Blake’s affirmation in 1793 that “a new heaven is begun” was matched a generation later by Percy Bysshe Shelley’s “The world’s great age begins anew.” “These, these will give the world another heart, / And other pulses,” wrote John Keats, referring to Leigh Hunt and William Wordsworth. Fresh ideals came to the fore; in particular, the ideal of freedom, long cherished in England, was being extended to every range of human endeavor. As that ideal swept through Europe, it became natural to believe that the age of tyrants might soon end.

The most notable feature of the poetry of the time is the new role of individual thought and personal feeling. Where the main trend of 18th-century poetics had been to praise the general, to see the poet as a spokesman of society addressing a cultivated and homogeneous audience and having as his end the conveyance of “truth,” the Romantics found the source of poetry in the particular, unique experience. Blake’s marginal comment on Sir Joshua Reynolds’s *Discourses* expresses the position with characteristic vehemence: “To Generalize is to be an Idiot. To Particularize is the alone Distinction of Merit.” The poet was seen as an individual distinguished from his fellows by the intensity of his perceptions, taking as his basic subject matter the workings of his own mind. Poetry was regarded as conveying its own truth; sincerity was the criterion by which it was to be judged.

The emphasis on feeling—seen perhaps at its finest in the poems of Robert Burns—was in some ways a continuation of the earlier “cult of sensibility”; and it is worth remembering that Alexander Pope praised his father as having known no language but the language of the heart. But feeling had begun to receive particular emphasis and is found in most of the Romantic definitions of poetry. Wordsworth called poetry “the spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling,” and in 1833 John Stuart Mill defined poetry as “feeling itself, employing thought only as the medium of its utterance.” It followed that the best poetry was that in which the greatest intensity of feeling was expressed, and hence a new importance was attached to the lyric. Another key quality of Romantic writing was its shift from the mimetic, or imitative, assumptions of the Neoclassical era to a new stress on imagination.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge saw the imagination as the supreme poetic quality, a quasi-divine creative force that made the poet a godlike being. Samuel Johnson had seen the components of poetry as “invention, imagination and judgement,” but Blake wrote: “One Power alone makes a Poet: Imagination, the Divine Vision.” The poets of this period accordingly placed great emphasis on the workings of the unconscious mind, on dreams and reveries, on the supernatural, and on the childlike or primitive view of the world, this last being regarded as valuable because its clarity and intensity had not been overlaid by the restrictions of civilized “reason.” Rousseau’s sentimental conception of the “noble savage” was often invoked, and often by those who were ignorant that the phrase is Dryden’s or that the type was adumbrated in the “poor Indian” of Pope’s *An Essay on Man*.

A further sign of the diminished stress placed on judgment is the Romantic attitude to form: if poetry must be spontaneous, sincere, intense, it should be fashioned primarily

according to the dictates of the creative imagination. Wordsworth advised a young poet, “You feel strongly; trust to those feelings, and your poem will take its shape and proportions as a tree does from the vital principle that actuates it.” This organic view of poetry is opposed to the classical theory of “genres,” each with its own linguistic decorum; and it led to the feeling that poetic sublimity was unattainable except in short passages.

Hand in hand with the new conception of poetry and the insistence on a new subject matter went a demand for new ways of writing. Wordsworth and his followers, particularly Keats, found the prevailing poetic diction of the late 18th century stale and stilted, or “gaudy and inane,” and totally unsuited to the expression of their perceptions. It could not be, for them, the language of feeling, and Wordsworth accordingly sought to bring the language of poetry back to that of common speech. Wordsworth’s own diction, however, often differs from his theory. Nevertheless, when he published his preface to *Lyrical Ballads* in 1800, the time was ripe for a change: the flexible diction of earlier 18th-century poetry had hardened into a merely conventional language.

Poetry:

Blake, Wordsworth, and Coleridge

Useful as it is to trace the common elements in Romantic poetry, there was little conformity among the poets themselves. It is misleading to read the poetry of the first Romantics as if it had been written primarily to express their feelings. Their concern was rather to change the intellectual climate of the age. William Blake had been dissatisfied since boyhood with the current state of poetry and what he considered the irreligious drabness of contemporary thought. His early development of a protective shield of mocking humour with which to face a world in which science had become trifling and art inconsequential is visible in the satirical *An Island in the Moon* (written c. 1784–85); he then took the bolder step of setting aside sophistication in the visionary *Songs of Innocence* (1789).

His desire for renewal encouraged him to view the outbreak of the French Revolution as a momentous event. In works such as *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790–93) and *Songs of Experience* (1794), he attacked the hypocrisies of the age and the impersonal cruelties resulting from the dominance of analytic reason in contemporary thought. As it became clear that the ideals of the Revolution were not likely to be realized in his time, he renewed his efforts to revise his contemporaries’ view of the universe and to construct a new mythology centred not in the God of the Bible but in Urizen, a repressive figure of reason and

law whom he believed to be the deity actually worshipped by his contemporaries. The story of Urizen's rise was set out in *The First Book of Urizen* (1794) and then, more ambitiously, in the unfinished manuscript *Vala* (later redrafted as *The Four Zoas*), written from about 1796 to about 1807.

Blake developed these ideas in the visionary narratives of *Milton* (1804–08) and *Jerusalem* (1804–20). Here, still using his own mythological characters, he portrayed the imaginative artist as the hero of society and suggested the possibility of redemption from the fallen (or Urizenic) condition.

William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, meanwhile, were also exploring the implications of the French Revolution. Wordsworth, who lived in France in 1791–92 and fathered an illegitimate child there, was distressed when, soon after his return, Britain declared war on the republic, dividing his allegiance. For the rest of his career, he was to brood on those events, trying to develop a view of humanity that would be faithful to his twin sense of the pathos of individual human fates and the unrealized potentialities in humanity as a whole.

The first factor emerges in his early manuscript poems “*The Ruined Cottage*” and “*The Pedlar*” (both to form part of the later *Excursion*); the second was developed from 1797, when he and his sister, Dorothy, with whom he was living in the west of England, were in close contact with Coleridge. Stirred simultaneously by Dorothy's immediacy of feeling, manifested everywhere in her *Journals* (written 1798–1803, published 1897), and by Coleridge's imaginative and speculative genius, he produced the poems collected in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). The volume began with Coleridge's “*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*,” continued with poems displaying delight in the powers of nature and the humane instincts of ordinary people, and concluded with the meditative “*Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey*,” Wordsworth's attempt to set out his mature faith in nature and humanity.

His investigation of the relationship between nature and the human mind continued in the long autobiographical poem addressed to Coleridge and later titled *The Prelude* (1798–99 in two books; 1804 in five books; 1850 in 13 books; revised continuously and published posthumously, 1850). Here he traced the value for a poet of having been a child “fostered alike by beauty and by fear” by an upbringing in sublime surroundings. *The Prelude* constitutes the most significant English expression of the Romantic discovery of the self as a topic for art and literature. The poem also makes much of the work of memory, a theme

explored as well in the “Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood.” In poems such as “Michael” and “The Brothers,” by contrast, written for the second volume of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), Wordsworth dwelt on the pathos and potentialities of ordinary lives.

Coleridge’s poetic development during these years paralleled Wordsworth’s. Having briefly brought together images of nature and the mind in “The Eolian Harp” (1796), he devoted himself to more-public concerns in poems of political and social prophecy, such as “Religious Musings” and “The Destiny of Nations.” Becoming disillusioned in 1798 with his earlier politics, however, and encouraged by Wordsworth, he turned back to the relationship between nature and the human mind. Poems such as “This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison,” “The Nightingale,” and “Frost at Midnight” (now sometimes called the “conversation poems” but collected by Coleridge himself as “Meditative Poems in Blank Verse”) combine sensitive descriptions of nature with subtlety of psychological comment. “Kubla Khan” (1797 or 1798, published 1816), a poem that Coleridge said came to him in “a kind of Reverie,” represented a new kind of exotic writing, which he also exploited in the supernaturalism of “The Ancient Mariner” and the unfinished “Christabel.” After his visit to Germany in 1798–99, he renewed attention to the links between the subtler forces in nature and the human psyche; this attention bore fruit in letters, notebooks, literary criticism, theology, and philosophy. Simultaneously, his poetic output became sporadic. “Dejection: An Ode” (1802), another meditative poem, which first took shape as a verse letter to Sara Hutchinson, Wordsworth’s sister-in-law, memorably describes the suspension of his “shaping spirit of Imagination.”

The work of both poets was directed back to national affairs during these years by the rise of Napoleon. In 1802 Wordsworth dedicated a number of sonnets to the patriotic cause. The death in 1805 of his brother John, who was a captain in the merchant navy, was a grim reminder that, while he had been living in retirement as a poet, others had been willing to sacrifice themselves. From this time the theme of duty was to be prominent in his poetry. His political essay *Concerning the Relations of Great Britain, Spain and Portugal...as Affected by the Convention of Cintra* (1809) agreed with Coleridge’s periodical *The Friend* (1809–10) in deploring the decline of principle among statesmen. When *The Excursion* appeared in 1814 (the time of Napoleon’s first exile), Wordsworth announced the poem as the central section of a longer projected work, *The Recluse*, “a philosophical Poem, containing views of Man, Nature, and Society.” The plan was not fulfilled, however, and *The Excursion* was left

to stand in its own right as a poem of moral and religious consolation for those who had been disappointed by the failure of French revolutionary ideals.

Both Wordsworth and Coleridge benefited from the advent in 1811 of the Regency, which brought a renewed interest in the arts. Coleridge's lectures on Shakespeare became fashionable, his play *Remorse* was briefly produced, and his volume of poems *Christabel; Kubla Khan: A Vision; The Pains of Sleep* was published in 1816. *Biographia Literaria* (1817), an account of his own development, combined philosophy and literary criticism in a new way and made an enduring and important contribution to literary theory. Coleridge settled at Highgate in 1816, and he was sought there as "the most impressive talker of his age" (in the words of the essayist William Hazlitt). His later religious writings made a considerable impact on Victorian readers.

Other poets of the early Romantic period:

In his own lifetime, Blake's poetry was scarcely known. Sir Walter Scott, by contrast, was thought of as a major poet for his vigorous and evocative verse narratives *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805) and *Marmion* (1808). Other verse writers were also highly esteemed. *The Elegiac Sonnets* (1784) of Charlotte Smith and the *Fourteen Sonnets* (1789) of William Lisle Bowles were received with enthusiasm by Coleridge. Thomas Campbell is now chiefly remembered for his patriotic lyrics such as "Ye Mariners of England" and "The Battle of Hohenlinden" (1807) and for the critical preface to his *Specimens of the British Poets* (1819); Samuel Rogers was known for his brilliant table talk (published 1856, after his death, as *Recollections of the Table-Talk of Samuel Rogers*), as well as for his exquisite but exiguous poetry. Another admired poet of the day was Thomas Moore, whose *Irish Melodies* began to appear in 1808. His highly coloured narrative *Lalla Rookh: An Oriental Romance* (1817) and his satirical poetry were also immensely popular. Charlotte Smith was not the only significant woman poet in this period. Helen Maria Williams's *Poems* (1786), Ann Batten Cristall's *Poetical Sketches* (1795), Mary Robinson's *Sappho and Phaon* (1796), and Mary Tighe's *Psyche* (1805) all contain notable work.

Robert Southey was closely associated with Wordsworth and Coleridge and was looked upon as a prominent member, with them, of the "Lake school" of poetry. His originality is best seen in his ballads and his nine "English Eclogues," three of which were first published in the 1799 volume of his *Poems* with a prologue explaining that these verse

sketches of contemporary life bore “no resemblance to any poems in our language.” His “Oriental” narrative poems *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801) and *The Curse of Kehama* (1810) were successful in their own time, but his fame is based on his prose work—the *Life of Nelson* (1813), the *History of the Peninsular War* (1823–32), and his classic formulation of the children’s tale “The Three Bears.”

George Crabbe wrote poetry of another kind: his sensibility, his values, much of his diction, and his heroic couplet verse form belong to the 18th century. He differs from the earlier Augustans, however, in his subject matter, concentrating on realistic, unsentimental accounts of the life of the poor and the middle classes. He shows considerable narrative gifts in his collections of verse tales (in which he anticipates many short-story techniques) and great powers of description. His antipastoral *The Village* appeared in 1783. After a long silence, he returned to poetry with *The Parish Register* (1807), *The Borough* (1810), *Tales in Verse* (1812), and *Tales of the Hall* (1819), which gained him great popularity in the early 19th century.

The later Romantics: Shelley, Keats, and Byron

The poets of the next generation shared their predecessors’ passion for liberty (now set in a new perspective by the Napoleonic Wars) and were in a position to learn from their experiments. Percy Bysshe Shelley in particular was deeply interested in politics, coming early under the spell of the anarchist views of William Godwin, whose *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* had appeared in 1793. Shelley’s revolutionary ardor caused him to claim in his critical essay “A Defence of Poetry” (1821, published 1840) that “the most unfailing herald, companion, and follower of the awakening of a great people to work a beneficial change in opinion or institution, is poetry,” and that poets are “the unacknowledged legislators of the world.” This fervor burns throughout the early *Queen Mab* (1813), the long *Laon and Cythna* (retitled *The Revolt of Islam*, 1818), and the lyrical drama *Prometheus Unbound* (1820).

Shelley saw himself at once as poet and prophet, as the fine “Ode to the West Wind” (1819) makes clear. Despite his grasp of practical politics, however, it is a mistake to look for concreteness in his poetry, where his concern is with subtleties of perception and with the underlying forces of nature: his most characteristic images are of sky and weather, of lights and fires. His poetic stance invites the reader to respond with similar outgoing aspiration. It adheres to the Rousseauistic belief in an underlying spirit in individuals, one truer to human

nature itself than the behavior evinced and approved by society. In that sense his material is transcendental and cosmic and his expression thoroughly appropriate. Possessed of great technical brilliance, he is, at his best, a poet of excitement and power.

John Keats, by contrast, was a poet so sensuous and physically specific that his early work, such as *Endymion* (1818), could produce an over-luxuriant, cloying effect. As the program set out in his early poem "Sleep and Poetry" shows, however, Keats was determined to discipline himself: even before February 1820, when he first began to cough blood, he may have known that he had not long to live, and he devoted himself to the expression of his vision with feverish intensity. He experimented with many kinds of poems: "Isabella" (published 1820), an adaptation of a tale by Giovanni Boccaccio, is a tour de force of craftsmanship in its attempt to reproduce a medieval atmosphere and at the same time a poem involved in contemporary politics.

His epic fragment *Hyperion* (begun in 1818 and abandoned, published 1820; later begun again and published posthumously as *The Fall of Hyperion* in 1856) has a new sparseness of imagery, but Keats soon found the style too Miltonic and decided to give himself up to what he called "other sensations." Some of these "other sensations" are found in the poems of 1819, Keats's *annus mirabilis*: "The Eve of St. Agnes" and the great odes "To a Nightingale," "On a Grecian Urn," and "To Autumn." These, with the *Hyperion* poems, represent the summit of Keats's achievement, showing what has been called "the disciplining of sensation into symbolic meaning," the complex themes being handled with a concrete richness of detail. His superb letters show the full range of the intelligence at work in his poetry.

George Gordon, Lord Byron, who differed from Shelley and Keats in themes and manner, was at one with them in reflecting their shift toward "Mediterranean" topics. Having thrown down the gauntlet in his early poem *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809), in which he directed particular scorn at poets of sensibility and declared his own allegiance to Milton, Dryden, and Pope, he developed a poetry of dash and flair, in many cases with a striking hero. His two longest poems, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812–18) and *Don Juan* (1819–24), his masterpiece, provided alternative personae for himself, the one a bitter and melancholy exile among the historic sites of Europe, the other a picaresque adventurer enjoying a series of amorous adventures. The gloomy and misanthropic vein was further mined in dramatic poems such as *Manfred* (1817) and *Cain* (1821), which helped to secure

his reputation in Europe, but he is now remembered best for witty, ironic, and less portentous writings, such as *Beppo* (1818), in which he first used the ottava rime form. The easy, nonchalant, biting style developed there became a formidable device in *Don Juan* and in his satire on Southey, *The Vision of Judgment* (1822).

Other poets of the later period:

John Clare, a Northamptonshire man of humble background, achieved early success with *Poems Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery* (1820), *The Village Minstrel* (1821), and *The Shepherd's Calendar* (1827). Both his reputation and his mental health collapsed in the late 1830s. He spent the later years of his life in an asylum in Northampton; the poetry he wrote there was rediscovered in the 20th century. His natural simplicity and lucidity of diction, his intent observation, his almost Classical poise, and the unassuming dignity of his attitude to life make him one of the most quietly moving of English poets. Thomas Lovell Beddoes, whose violent imagery and obsession with death and the macabre recall the Jacobean dramatists, represents an imagination at the opposite pole; metrical virtuosity is displayed in the songs and lyrical passages from his over-sensational tragedy *Death's Jest-Book* (begun 1825; published posthumously, 1850). Another minor writer who found inspiration in the 17th century was George Darley, some of whose songs from *Nepenthe* (1835) keep their place in anthologies. The comic writer Thomas Hood also wrote poems of social protest, such as "The Song of the Shirt" (1843) and "The Bridge of Sighs," as well as the graceful *Plea of the Midsummer Fairies* (1827). Felicia Hemans's best-remembered poem, "Casabianca," appeared in her volume *The Forest Sanctuary* (1825). This was followed in 1828 by the more substantial *Records of Woman*.

The novel: from the Gothic novel to Austen and Scott:

The death of Tobias Smollett in 1771 brought an end to the first great period of novel writing in English. Not until the appearance of Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* in 1811 and Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley* in 1814 would there again be works of prose fiction that ranked with the masterpieces of Richardson, Fielding, Sterne, and Smollett.

It is possible to suggest practical reasons for this 40-year partial eclipse. The war with France made paper expensive, causing publishers in the 1790s and early 1800s to prefer short, dense forms, such as poetry. It might also be argued, in more broadly cultural terms, that the comic and realistic qualities of the novel were at odds with the new sensibility of Romanticism. But the problem was always one of quality rather than quantity. Flourishing as

a form of entertainment, the novel nevertheless underwent several important developments in this period. One was the invention of the Gothic novel. Another was the appearance of a politically engaged fiction in the years immediately before the French Revolution. A third was the rise of women writers to the prominence that they have held ever since in prose fiction.

The sentimental tradition of Richardson and Sterne persisted until the 1790s with Henry Brooke's *The Fool of Quality* (1765–70), Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling* (1771), and Charles Lamb's *A Tale of Rosamund Gray and Old Blind Margaret* (1798). Novels of this kind were, however, increasingly mocked in the later years of the 18th century.

The comic realism of Fielding and Smollett continued in a more sporadic way. John Moore gave a cosmopolitan flavor to the worldly wisdom of his predecessors in *Zeluco* (1786) and *Mordaunt* (1800). Fanny Burney carried the comic realist manner into the field of female experience with the novels *Evelina* (1778), *Cecilia* (1782), and *Camilla* (1796). Her discovery of the comic and didactic potential of a plot charting a woman's progress from the nursery to the altar would be important for several generations of female novelists.

More striking than these continuations of previous modes, however, was Horace Walpole's invention, in *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), of what became known as the Gothic novel. Walpole's intention was to "blend" the fantastic plot of "ancient romance" with the realistic characterization of "modern" (or novel) romance. Characters would respond with terror to extraordinary events, and readers would vicariously participate. Walpole's innovation was not significantly imitated until the 1790s, when—perhaps because the violence of the French Revolution created a taste for a correspondingly extreme mode of fiction—a torrent of such works appeared.

The most important writer of these stories was Ann Radcliffe, who distinguished between "terror" and "horror." Terror "expands the soul" by its use of "uncertainty and obscurity." Horror, on the other hand, is actual and specific. Radcliffe's own novels, especially *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and *The Italian* (1797), were examples of the fiction of terror. Vulnerable heroines, trapped in ruined castles, are terrified by supernatural perils that prove to be illusions.

Matthew Lewis, by contrast, wrote the fiction of horror. In *The Monk* (1796) the hero commits both murder and incest, and the repugnant details include a woman's imprisonment in a vault full of rotting human corpses. Some later examples of Gothic fiction have more-

sophisticated agendas. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818) is a novel of ideas that anticipates science fiction. James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) is a subtle study of religious mania and split personality. Even in its more-vulgar examples, however, Gothic fiction can symbolically address serious political and psychological issues.

By the 1790s, realistic fiction had acquired a polemical role, reflecting the ideas of the French Revolution, though sacrificing much of its comic power in the process. One practitioner of this type of fiction, Robert Bage, is best remembered for *Hermesprong; or, Man as He Is Not* (1796), in which a "natural" hero rejects the conventions of contemporary society. The radical Thomas Holcroft published two novels, *Anna St. Ives* (1792) and *The Adventures of Hugh Trevor* (1794), influenced by the ideas of William Godwin. Godwin himself produced the best example of this political fiction in *Things as They Are; or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams* (1794), borrowing techniques from the Gothic novel to enliven a narrative of social oppression.

Women novelists contributed extensively to this ideological debate. Radicals such as Mary Wollstonecraft (*Mary*, 1788; *Maria; or, The Wrongs of Woman*, 1798), Elizabeth Inchbald (*Nature and Art*, 1796), and Mary Hays (*Memoirs of Emma Courtney*, 1796) celebrated the rights of the individual. Anti-Jacobin novelists such as Jane West (*A Gossip's Story*, 1796; *A Tale of the Times*, 1799), Amelia Opie (*Adeline Mowbray*, 1804), and Mary Brunton (*Self-Control*, 1811) stressed the dangers of social change. Some writers were more bipartisan, notably Elizabeth Hamilton (*Memoirs of Modern Philosophers*, 1800) and Maria Edgeworth, whose long, varied, and distinguished career extended from *Letters for Literary Ladies* (1795) to *Helen* (1834). Her pioneering regional novel *Castle Rackrent* (1800), an affectionately comic portrait of life in 18th-century Ireland, influenced the subsequent work of Scott.

Jane Austen stands on the conservative side of this battle of ideas, though in novels that incorporate their anti-Jacobin and anti-Romantic views so subtly into love stories that many readers are unaware of them. Three of her novels—*Sense and Sensibility* (first published in 1811; originally titled "Elinor and Marianne"), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813; originally "First Impressions"), and *Northanger Abbey* (published posthumously in 1817)—were drafted in the late 1790s. Three more novels—*Mansfield Park* (1814), *Emma* (1815), and *Persuasion* (1817, together with *Northanger Abbey*)—were written between 1811 and

1817. Austen uses, essentially, two standard plots. In one of these a right-minded but neglected heroine is gradually acknowledged to be correct by characters who have previously looked down on her (such as Fanny Price in *Mansfield Park* and Anne Elliot in *Persuasion*). In the other an attractive but self-deceived heroine (such as Emma Woodhouse in *Emma* or Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*) belatedly recovers from her condition of error and is rewarded with the partner she had previously despised or overlooked. On this slight framework, Austen constructs a powerful case for the superiority of the Augustan virtues of common sense, empiricism, and rationality to the new “Romantic” values of imagination, egotism, and subjectivity. With Austen the comic brilliance and exquisite narrative construction of Fielding return to the English novel, in conjunction with a distinctive and deadly irony.

Thomas Love Peacock is another witty novelist who combined an intimate knowledge of Romantic ideas with a satirical attitude toward them, though in comic debates rather than conventional narratives. *Headlong Hall* (1816), *Melincourt* (1817), and *Nightmare Abbey* (1818) are sharp accounts of contemporary intellectual and cultural fashions, as are the two much later fictions in which Peacock reused this successful formula, *Crotchet Castle* (1831) and *Gryll Grange* (1860–61).

Sir Walter Scott is the English writer who can in the fullest sense be called a Romantic novelist. After a successful career as a poet, Scott switched to prose fiction in 1814 with the first of the “Waverley novels.” In the first phase of his work as a novelist, Scott wrote about the Scotland of the 17th and 18th centuries, charting its gradual transition from the feudal era into the modern world in a series of vivid human dramas. *Waverley* (1814), *Guy Mannering* (1815), *The Antiquary* (1816), *Old Mortality* (1816), *Rob Roy* (1817), and *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818) are the masterpieces of this period. In a second phase, beginning with *Ivanhoe* in 1819, Scott turned to stories set in medieval England. Finally, with *Quentin Durward* in 1823, he added European settings to his historical repertoire. Scott combines a capacity for comic social observation with a Romantic sense of landscape and an epic grandeur, enlarging the scope of the novel in ways that equip it to become the dominant literary form of the later 19th century.

Discursive prose:

The French Revolution prompted a fierce debate about social and political principles, a debate conducted in impassioned and often eloquent polemical prose. Richard Price’s

Discourse on the Love of Our Country (1789) was answered by Edmund Burke's conservative *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) and by Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790) and *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), the latter of which is an important early statement of feminist issues that gained greater recognition in the next century.

The Romantic emphasis on individualism is reflected in much of the prose of the period, particularly in criticism and the familiar essay. Among the most vigorous writing is that of William Hazlitt, a forthright and subjective critic whose most characteristic work is seen in his collections of lectures *On the English Poets* (1818) and *On the English Comic Writers* (1819) and in *The Spirit of the Age* (1825), a series of valuable portraits of his contemporaries. In *The Essays of Elia* (1823) and *The Last Essays of Elia* (1833), Charles Lamb, an even more personal essayist, projects with apparent artlessness a carefully managed portrait of himself—charming, whimsical, witty, sentimental, and nostalgic. As his fine *Letters* show, however, he could on occasion produce mordant satire. Mary Russell Mitford's *Our Village* (1832) is another example of the charm and humour of the familiar essay in this period. Thomas De Quincey appealed to the new interest in writing about the self, producing a colorful account of his early experiences in *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1821, revised and enlarged in 1856). His unusual gift of evoking states of dream and nightmare is best seen in essays such as “The English Mail Coach” and “On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth”; his essay “On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts” (1827; extended in 1839 and 1854) is an important anticipation of the Victorian Aesthetic movement. Walter Savage Landor's detached, lapidary style is seen at its best in some brief lyrics and in a series of erudite *Imaginary Conversations*, which began to appear in 1824.

The critical discourse of the era was dominated by the Whig quarterly *The Edinburgh Review* (begun 1802), edited by Francis Jeffrey, and its Tory rivals *The Quarterly Review* (begun 1809) and the monthly *Blackwood's Magazine* (begun 1817). Though their attacks on contemporary writers could be savagely partisan, they set a notable standard of fearless and independent journalism. Similar independence was shown by Leigh Hunt, whose outspoken journalism, particularly in his *Examiner* (begun 1808), was of wide influence, and by William Cobbett, whose *Rural Rides* (collected in 1830 from his *Political Register*) gives a telling picture, in forceful and clear prose, of the English countryside of his day.

Drama:

This was a great era of English theatre, notable for the acting of John Philip Kemble, Sarah Siddons, and, from 1814, the brilliant Edmund Kean. But it was not a great period of playwriting. The exclusive right to perform plays enjoyed by the “Royal” (or “legitimate”) theatres created a damaging split between high and low art forms. The classic repertoire continued to be played but in buildings that had grown too large for subtle staging, and, when commissioning new texts, legitimate theatres were torn between a wish to preserve the blank-verse manner of the great tradition of English tragedy and a need to reflect the more-popular modes of performance developed by their illegitimate rivals.

Charles Kean as Lear in *King Lear*

This problem was less acute in comedy, where prose was the norm and Oliver Goldsmith and Richard Brinsley Sheridan had, in the 1770s, revived the tradition of “laughing comedy.” But despite their attack on it, sentimental comedy remained the dominant mode, persisting in the work of Richard Cumberland (*The West Indian*, 1771), Hannah Cowley (*The Belle’s Stratagem*, 1780), Elizabeth Inchbald (*I’ll Tell You What*, 1785), John O’Keeffe (*Wild Oats*, 1791), Frederic Reynolds (*The Dramatist*, 1789), George Colman the Younger (*John Bull*, 1803), and Thomas Morton (*Speed the Plough*, 1800). Sentimental drama received a fresh impetus in the 1790s from the work of the German dramatist August von Kotzebue; Inchbald translated his controversial *Das Kind Der Liebe* (1790) as *Lovers’ Vows* in 1798.

By the 1780s, sentimental plays were beginning to anticipate what would become the most important dramatic form of the early 19th century: melodrama. Thomas Holcroft’s *Seduction* (1787) and *The Road to Ruin* (1792) have something of the moral simplicity, tragicomic plot, and sensationalism of the “*mélodrames*” of Guilbert de Pixérécourt; Holcroft translated the latter’s *Coelina* (1800) as *A Tale of Mystery* in 1802. Using background music to intensify the emotional effect, the form appealed chiefly, but not exclusively, to the working-class audiences of the “illegitimate” theatres. Many early examples, such as Matthew Lewis’s *The Castle Spectre* (first performance 1797) and J.R. Planché’s *The Vampire* (1820), were theatrical equivalents of the Gothic novel. But there were also criminal melodramas (Isaac Pocock, *The Miller and His Men*, 1813), patriotic melodramas (Douglas Jerrold, *Black-Eyed Susan*, 1829), domestic melodramas (John Howard Payne, *Clari*, 1823), and even industrial melodramas (John Walker, *The Factory Lad*, 1832). The energy and

narrative force of the form would gradually help to revivify the “legitimate” serious drama, and its basic concerns would persist in the films and television of a later period.

Legitimate drama, performed at patent theatres, is best represented by the work of James Sheridan Knowles, who wrote stiffly neo-Elizabethan verse plays, both tragic and comic (*Virgilius*, 1820; *The Hunchback*, 1832). The great lyric poets of the era all attempted to write tragedies of this kind, with little success. Coleridge’s *Osorio* (1797) was produced (as *Remorse*) at Drury Lane in 1813, and Byron’s *Marino Faliero* in 1821. Wordsworth’s *The Borderers* (1797), Keats’s *Otho the Great* (1819), and Percy Bysshe Shelley’s *The Cenci* (1819) remained unperformed, though *The Cenci* has a sustained narrative tension that distinguishes it from the general Romantic tendency to subordinate action to character and produce “closet dramas” (for reading) rather than theatrical texts. The Victorian poet Robert Browning would spend much of his early career writing verse plays for the legitimate theatre (*Strafford*, 1837; *A Blot in the ’Scutcheon*, produced in 1843). But after the Theatre Regulation Act of 1843, which abolished the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate drama, demand for this kind of play rapidly disappeared.

Self-consciousness was the quality that John Stuart Mill identified, in 1838, as “the daemon of the men of genius of our time.” Introspection was inevitable in the literature of an immediately Post-Romantic period, and the age itself was as prone to self-analysis as were its individual authors. Hazlitt’s essays in *The Spirit of the Age* (1825) were echoed by Mill’s articles of the same title in 1831, by Thomas Carlyle’s essays “Signs of the Times” (1829) and “Characteristics” (1831), and by Richard Henry Horne’s *New Spirit of the Age* in 1844.

This persistent scrutiny was the product of an acute sense of change. Britain had emerged from the long war with France (1793–1815) as a great power and as the world’s predominant economy. Visiting England in 1847, the American writer Ralph Waldo Emerson observed of the English that “the modern world is theirs. They have made and make it day by day.”

This new status as the world’s first urban and industrialized society was responsible for the extraordinary wealth, vitality, and self-confidence of the period. Abroad these energies expressed themselves in the growth of the British Empire. At home they were accompanied by rapid social change and fierce intellectual controversy.

The juxtaposition of this new industrial wealth with a new kind of urban poverty is only one of the paradoxes that characterize this long and diverse period. In religion the

climax of the Evangelical revival coincided with an unprecedentedly severe set of challenges to faith. The idealism and transcendentalism of Romantic thought were challenged by the growing prestige of empirical science and utilitarian moral philosophy, a process that encouraged more-objective modes in literature. Realism would be one of the great artistic movements of the era. In politics a widespread commitment to economic and personal freedom was, nonetheless, accompanied by a steady growth in the power of the state. The prudery for which the Victorian Age is notorious in fact went hand in hand with an equally violent immoralism, seen, for example, in Algernon Charles Swinburne's poetry or the writings of the Decadents. Most fundamentally of all, the rapid change that many writers interpreted as progress inspired in others a fierce nostalgia. Enthusiastic rediscoveries of ancient Greece, Elizabethan England, and, especially, the Middle Ages by writers, artists, architects, and designers made this age of change simultaneously an age of active and determined historicism.

John Stuart Mill caught this contradictory quality, with characteristic acuteness, in his essays on Jeremy Bentham (1838) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1840). Every contemporary thinker, he argued, was indebted to these two "seminal minds." Yet Bentham, as the enduring voice of the Enlightenment, and Coleridge, as the chief English example of the Romantic reaction against it, held diametrically opposed views.

A similar sense of sharp controversy is given by Carlyle in *Sartor Resartus* (1833–34). An eccentric philosophical fiction in the tradition of Swift and Sterne, the book argues for a new mode of spirituality in an age that Carlyle himself suggests to be one of mechanism. Carlyle's choice of the novel form and the book's humour, generic flexibility, and political engagement point forward to distinctive characteristics of Victorian literature.

Early Victorian literature: the age of the novel:

Several major figures of English Romanticism lived on into this period. Coleridge died in 1834, De Quincey in 1859. Wordsworth succeeded Southey as poet laureate in 1843 and held the post until his own death seven years later. Posthumous publication caused some striking chronological anomalies. Percy Bysshe Shelley's "A Defense of Poetry" was not published until 1840. Keats's letters appeared in 1848 and Wordsworth's *Prelude* in 1850.

Despite this persistence, critics of the 1830s felt that there had been a break in the English literary tradition, which they identified with the death of Byron in 1824. The deaths of Austen in 1817 and Scott in 1832 should perhaps have been seen as even more significant,

for the new literary era has, with justification, been seen as the age of the novel. More than 60,000 works of prose fiction were published in Victorian Britain by as many as 7,000 novelists. The three-volume format (or “three-decker”) was the standard mode of first publication; it was a form created for sale to and circulation by lending libraries. It was challenged in the 1830s by the advent of serialization in magazines and by the publication of novels in 32-page monthly parts. But only in the 1890s did the three-decker finally yield to the modern single-volume format.

Charles Dickens first attracted attention with the descriptive essays and tales originally written for newspapers, beginning in 1833, and collected as *Sketches by “Boz”* (1836). On the strength of this volume, Dickens contracted to write a historical novel in the tradition of Scott (eventually published as *Barnaby Rudge* in 1841). By chance his gifts were turned into a more distinctive channel. In February 1836 he agreed to write the text for a series of comic engravings. The unexpected result was *The Pickwick Papers* (1836–37), one of the funniest novels in English literature. By July 1837, sales of the monthly installments exceeded 40,000 copies. Dickens’s extraordinary popular appeal and the enormous imaginative potential of the Victorian novel were simultaneously established.

His early novels have been attacked at times for sentimentality, melodrama, or shapelessness. They are now increasingly appreciated for their comic or macabre zest and their poetic fertility. *Dombey and Son* (1846–48) marks the beginning of Dickens’s later period. He thenceforth combined his gift for vivid caricature with a stronger sense of personality, designed his plots more carefully, and used symbolism to give his books greater thematic coherence. Of the masterpieces of the next decade, *David Copperfield* (1849–50) uses the form of a fictional autobiography to explore the great Romantic theme of the growth and comprehension of the self. *Bleak House* (1852–53) addresses itself to law and litigiousness; *Hard Times* (1854) is a Carlylean defense of art in an age of mechanism; and *Little Dorrit* (1855–57) dramatizes the idea of imprisonment, both literal and spiritual. Two great novels, both involved with issues of social class and human worth, appeared in the 1860s: *Great Expectations* (1860–61) and *Our Mutual Friend* (1864–65). His final book, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (published posthumously, 1870), was left tantalizingly uncompleted at the time of his death.

Unlike Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray came from a wealthy and educated background. The loss of his fortune at age 22, however, meant that he too learned his trade in

the field of sketch writing and occasional journalism. His early fictions were published as serials in *Fraser's Magazine* or as contributions to the great Victorian comic magazine *Punch* (founded 1841). For his masterpiece, *Vanity Fair* (1847–48), however, he adopted Dickens's procedure of publication in monthly parts. Thackeray's satirical acerbity is here combined with a broad narrative sweep, a sophisticated self-consciousness about the conventions of fiction, and an ambitious historical survey of the transformation of English life in the years between the Regency and the mid-Victorian period. His later novels never match this sharpness. *Vanity Fair* was subtitled "A Novel Without a Hero." Subsequently, it has been suggested, a more sentimental Thackeray wrote novels without villains.

Elizabeth Gaskell began her career as one of the "Condition of England" novelists of the 1840s, responding like Frances Trollope, Benjamin Disraeli, and Charles Kingsley to the economic crisis of that troubled decade. *Mary Barton* (1848) and *Ruth* (1853) are both novels about social problems, as is *North and South* (1854–55), although, like her later work—*Sylvia's Lovers* (1863), *Wives and Daughters* (1864–66), and the remarkable novella *Cousin Phyllis* (1864)—this book also has a psychological complexity that anticipates George Eliot's novels of provincial life.

Political novels, religious novels, historical novels, sporting novels, Irish novels, crime novels, and comic novels all flourished in this period. The years 1847–48, indeed, represent a pinnacle of simultaneous achievement in English fiction. In addition to *Vanity Fair*, *Dombey and Son*, and *Mary Barton*, they saw the completion of Disraeli's trilogy of political novels—*Coningsby* (1844), *Sybil* (1845), and *Tancred* (1847)—and the publication of first novels by Kingsley, Anne Brontë, Charlotte Brontë, Emily Brontë, and Anthony Trollope. For the first time, literary genius appeared to be finding its most natural expression in prose fiction, rather than in poetry or drama. By 1853 the poet Arthur Hugh Clough would concede that "the modern novel is preferred to the modern poem."

In many ways, however, the qualities of Romantic verse could be absorbed, rather than simply superseded, by the Victorian novel. This is suggested clearly by the work of the Brontë sisters. Growing up in a remote but cultivated vicarage in Yorkshire, they, as children, invented the imaginary kingdoms of Angria and Gondal. These inventions supplied the context for many of the poems in their first, and pseudonymous, publication, *Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell* (1846). Their Gothic plots and Byronic passions also informed the novels that began to be published in the following year.

Anne Brontë wrote of the painful reality of disagreeable experience, although both her novels have cheerful romantic endings. *Agnes Grey* (1847) is a stark account of the working life of a governess, and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848) paints a grim picture of the heroine's marriage to an abusive husband. Charlotte Brontë, like her sisters, appears at first sight to have been writing a literal fiction of provincial life. In her first novel, *Jane Eyre* (1847), for example, the heroine's choice between sexual need and ethical duty belongs very firmly to the mode of moral realism. But her hair's-breadth escape from a bigamous marriage with her employer and the death by fire of his mad first wife derive from the rather different tradition of the Gothic novel. In *Shirley* (1849) Charlotte Brontë strove to be, in her own words, "as unromantic as Monday morning." In *Villette* (1853) the distinctive Gothic elements return to lend this study of the limits of stoicism an unexpected psychological intensity and drama.

Emily Brontë united these diverse traditions still more successfully in her only novel, *Wuthering Heights* (1847). Closely observed regional detail, precisely handled plot, and a sophisticated use of multiple internal narrators are combined with vivid imagery and an extravagantly Gothic theme. The result is a perfectly achieved study of elemental passions and the strongest possible refutation of the assumption that the age of the novel must also be an age of realism.

What is romanticism according to Wordsworth?

Romantics defined themselves in the belief that the city was second to the natural setting, where truth and a sense of "the real" emerges. Along these lines, Romantic thinkers such as Wordsworth believed that the individual can best understand themselves and their world when they are isolated from it, apart from it.

Who is the father of romantic poetry?

William Wordsworth is generally acknowledged as the father of Romantic poetry, he spent his life quietly in English Lake District, writing passionate poetry inspired by the beautiful and lonely countryside.

What is Romantic Age in English literature?

Romanticism (also known as the Romantic era) was an artistic, literary, musical and intellectual movement that originated in Europe toward the end of the 18th century.

What is poetry according to ST Coleridge?

A verbal composition designed to convey experiences, ideas, or emotions in a vivid and imaginative way, characterized by the use of language chosen for its sound and suggestive power and by the use of literary techniques such as meter, metaphor, and rhyme.

What is Keats most famous poem?

All of the major work is esteemed, but probably the most famous are the Odes, particularly “Ode to a Grecian Urn” (The Poetical Works of John Keats/Ode on a Grecian Urn) and “Ode to a Nightingale” (Ode to a Nightingale).

UNIT – 4

AGE OF TENNYSON (1832-1887)

Tennyson

Despite the growing prestige and proliferation of fiction, this age of the novel was in fact also an age of great poetry. Alfred Tennyson made his mark very early with *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* (1830) and *Poems* (1832; dated 1833), publications that led some critics to hail him as the natural successor to Keats and Shelley. A decade later, in *Poems* (1842), Tennyson combined in two volumes the best of his early work with a second volume of more-recent writing. The collection established him as the outstanding poet of the era.

In his early work Tennyson brought an exquisite lyric gift to late Romantic subject matter. The result is a poetry that, for all its debt to Keats, anticipates the French Symbolists of the 1880s. The death of his friend and supporter Arthur Hallam in 1833, however, left him vulnerable to accusations from less-sympathetic critics that this highly subjective verse was insufficiently engaged with the public issues of the day. The second volume of the *Poems* of 1842 contains two remarkable responses to this challenge. One is the dramatic monologue, a form of poetry in which the speaker is a figure other than the poet. Used occasionally by writers since the time of the Greek poet Theocritus, the technique was developed independently by both Tennyson and his great contemporary Robert Browning in the 1830s,

and it became the mode by which many of the greatest achievements of Victorian poetry were expressed. The other is the form that Tennyson called the “English Idyl,” in which he combined brilliant vignettes of contemporary landscape with relaxed debate.

In the major poems of his middle period, Tennyson combined the larger scale required by his new ambitions with his original gift for the brief lyric by building long poems out of short ones. *In Memoriam* (1850) is an elegy for Hallam, formed by 133 individual lyrics. Eloquent, vivid, and ample, it is at the same time an acute pathological study of individual grief and the central Victorian statement of the problems posed by the decline of Christian faith. *Maud* (1855) assembles 27 lyric poems into a single dramatic monologue that disturbingly explores the psychology of violence.

Tennyson became poet laureate in 1850 and wrote some apt and memorable poems on patriotic themes. The chief work of his later period, however, was *Idylls of the King* (1859–85). An Arthurian epic constructed as a series of idylls, or “little pictures,” it offers a sombre vision of an idealistic community in decay, implicitly articulating Tennyson’s anxieties about contemporary society.

G.K. Chesterton described Tennyson as “a suburban Virgil.” The elegant Virgilian note was the last thing aimed at by Robert Browning. Browning’s work was Germanic rather than Italianate, grotesque rather than idyllic, and colloquial rather than refined. The differences between Browning and Tennyson underline the creative diversity of the period.

Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Deeply influenced by Shelley, Robert Browning made two false starts. One was as a playwright in the 1830s and ’40s. The other was as the late-Romantic poet of the confessional meditation *Pauline* (1833) and the difficult though innovatory narrative poem *Sordello* (1840).

Browning found his individual and distinctively modern voice in 1842, with the volume *Dramatic Lyrics*. As the title suggests, it was a collection of dramatic monologues, among them “*Porphyria’s Lover*,” “*Johannes Agricola in Meditation*,” and “*My Last Duchess*.” The monologues make clear the radical originality of Browning’s new manner: they involve the reader in sympathetic identification with the interior processes of criminal or unconventional minds, requiring active rather than merely passive engagement in the

processes of moral judgment and self-discovery. More such monologues and some equally striking lyrics make up *Men and Women* (1855).

In 1846 Browning married Elizabeth Barrett. Though now remembered chiefly for her love poems *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (1850) and her experiment with the verse novel *Aurora Leigh* (1856; dated 1857), she was in her own lifetime far better known than her husband. Her *Poems* (1844) established her as a leading poet of the age. *Casa Guidi Windows* (1851) is a subtle reflection on her experience of Italian politics, and "A Musical Instrument" (1862) is one of the century's most memorable expressions of the difficulty of the poet's role. Only with the publication of *Dramatis Personae* (1864) did Robert Browning achieve the sort of fame that Tennyson had enjoyed for more than 20 years. The volume contains, in "Rabbi Ben Ezra," the most extreme statement of Browning's celebrated optimism. Hand in hand with this reassuring creed, however, go the skeptical intelligence and the sense of the grotesque displayed in such poems as "Caliban upon Setebos" and "Mr. Sludge, 'The Medium.'" "

His *The Ring and the Book* (1868–69) gives the dramatic monologue format unprecedented scope. Published in parts, like a Dickens novel, it tells a sordid murder story in a way that both explores moral issues and suggests the problematic nature of human knowledge. Browning's work after this date, though voluminous, is uneven.

Arnold and Clough

Matthew Arnold's first volume of verse, *The Strayed Reveller, and Other Poems* (1849), combined lyric grace with an acute sense of the dark philosophical landscape of the period. The title poem of his next collection, *Empedocles on Etna* (1852), is a sustained statement of the modern dilemma and a remarkable poetic embodiment of the process that Arnold called "the dialogue of the mind with itself." Arnold later suppressed this poem and attempted to write in a more impersonal manner. His greatest work ("Switzerland," "Dover Beach," "The Scholar-Gipsy") is, however, always elegiac in tone. In the 1860s he turned from verse to prose and became, with *Essays in Criticism* (1865), *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), and *Literature and Dogma* (1873), a lively and acute writer of literary, social, and religious criticism.

Arnold's friend Arthur Hugh Clough died young but managed nonetheless to produce three highly original poems. *The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich* (1848) is a narrative poem of modern life, written in hexameters. *Amours de Voyage* (1858) goes beyond this to the full-

scale verse novel, using multiple internal narrators and vivid contemporary detail. *Dipsychus* (published posthumously in 1865 but not available in an unexpurgated version until 1951) is a remarkable closet drama that debates issues of belief and morality with a frankness, and a metrical liveliness, unequaled in Victorian verse.

Early Victorian nonfiction prose

Carlyle may be said to have initiated Victorian literature with *Sartor Resartus*. He continued thereafter to have a powerful effect on its development. The French Revolution (1837), the book that made him famous, spoke very directly to this consciously post-revolutionary age. *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (1841) combined the Romantic idea of the genius with a further statement of German transcendentalist philosophy, which Carlyle opposed to the influential doctrines of empiricism and utilitarianism. Carlyle's political writing, in *Chartism* (1839; dated 1840), *Past and Present* (1843), and the splenetic *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (1850), inspired other writers to similar "prophetic" denunciations of laissez-faire economics and utilitarian ethics.

The first importance of John Ruskin is as an art critic who, in *Modern Painters* (5 vol., 1843–60), brought Romantic theory to the study of painting and forged an appropriate prose for its expression. But in *The Stones of Venice* (3 vol., 1851–53), Ruskin took the political medievalism of Carlyle's *Past and Present* and gave it a poetic fullness and force. This imaginative engagement with social and economic problems continued into *Unto This Last* (1860), *The Crown of Wild Olive* (1866), and *Fors Clavigera* (1871–84). John Henry Newman was a poet, novelist, and theologian who wrote many of the tracts, published as *Tracts for the Times* (1833–41), that promoted the Oxford movement, which sought to reassert the Roman Catholic identity of the Church of England. His subsequent religious development is memorably described in his *Apologia pro Vita Sua* (1864), one of the many great autobiographies of this introspective century.

Late Victorian literature

"The modern spirit," Matthew Arnold observed in 1865, "is now awake." In 1859 Charles Darwin had published *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*. Historians, philosophers, and scientists were all beginning to apply the idea of evolution to new areas of study of the human experience. Traditional conceptions of man's nature and place in the world were, as a consequence, under threat. Walter Pater summed up the process,

in 1866, by stating that “Modern thought is distinguished from ancient by its cultivation of the ‘relative’ spirit in place of the ‘absolute.’”

The economic crisis of the 1840s was long past. But the fierce political debates that led first to the Second Reform Act of 1867 and then to the battles for the enfranchisement of women were accompanied by a deepening crisis of belief.

The novel

Late Victorian fiction may express doubts and uncertainties, but in aesthetic terms it displays a new sophistication and self-confidence. The expatriate American novelist Henry James wrote in 1884 that until recently the English novel had “had no air of having a theory, a conviction, a consciousness of itself behind it.” Its acquisition of these things was due in no small part to Mary Ann Evans, better known as George Eliot. Initially a critic and translator, she was influenced, after the loss of her Christian faith, by the ideas of Ludwig Feuerbach and Auguste Comte. Her advanced intellectual interests combined with her sophisticated sense of the novel form to shape her remarkable fiction. Her early novels—*Adam Bede* (1859), *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), and *Silas Marner* (1861)—are closely observed studies of English rural life that offer, at the same time, complex contemporary ideas and a subtle tracing of moral issues. Her masterpiece, *Middlemarch* (1871–72), is an unprecedentedly full study of the life of a provincial town, focused on the thwarted idealism of her two principal characters. George Eliot is a realist, but her realism involves a scientific analysis of the interior processes of social and personal existence.

Her fellow realist Anthony Trollope published his first novel in 1847 but only established his distinctive manner with *The Warden* (1855), the first of a series of six novels set in the fictional county of Barsetshire and completed in 1867. This sequence was followed by a further series, the six-volume *Palliser* group (1864–80), set in the world of British parliamentary politics. Trollope published an astonishing total of 47 novels, and his *Autobiography* (1883) is a uniquely candid account of the working life of a Victorian writer.

The third major novelist of the 1870s was George Meredith, who also worked as a poet, a journalist, and a publisher’s reader. His prose style is eccentric and his achievement uneven. His greatest work of fiction, *The Egoist* (1879), however, is an incisive comic novel that embodies the distinctive theory of the corrective and therapeutic powers of laughter expressed in his lecture “The Idea of Comedy” (1877).

In the 1880s the three-volume novel, with its panoramic vistas and proliferating subplots, began to give way to more narrowly focused one-volume novels. At the same time, a gap started to open between popular fiction and the “literary” or “art” novel. The flowering of realist fiction was also accompanied, perhaps inevitably, by a revival of its opposite, the romance. The 1860s had produced a new subgenre, the sensation novel, seen at its best in the work of Wilkie Collins. Gothic novels and romances by Sheridan Le Fanu, Robert Louis Stevenson, William Morris, and Oscar Wilde; utopian fiction by Morris and Samuel Butler; and the early science fiction of H.G. Wells make it possible to speak of a full-scale romance revival.

Realism continued to flourish, however, sometimes encouraged by the example of European realist and naturalist novelists. Both George Moore and George Gissing were influenced by Émile Zola, though both also reacted against him. The 1890s saw intense concern with the social role of women, reflected in the New Woman fiction of Grant Allen (*The Woman Who Did*, 1895), Sarah Grand (*The Heavenly Twins*, 1893), and George Egerton (*Keynotes*, 1893). The heroines of such texts breach conventional assumptions by supporting woman suffrage, smoking, adopting “rational” dress, and rejecting traditional double standards in sexual behaviour.

The greatest novelist of this generation, however, was Thomas Hardy. His first published novel, *Desperate Remedies*, appeared in 1871 and was followed by 13 more before he abandoned prose to publish (in the 20th century) only poetry. His major fiction consists of the tragic novels of rural life, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* (1891), and *Jude the Obscure* (1895). In these novels his brilliant evocation of the landscape and people of his fictional Wessex is combined with a sophisticated sense of the “ache of modernism.”

Verse:

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, formed in 1848 and unofficially reinforced a decade later, was founded as a group of painters but also functioned as a school of writers who linked the incipient Aestheticism of Keats and De Quincey to the Decadent movement of the fin de siècle. Dante Gabriel Rossetti collected his early writing in *Poems* (1870), a volume that led the critic Robert Buchanan to attack him as the leader of “The Fleshly School of Poetry.” Rossetti combined some subtle treatments of contemporary life with a new kind of medievalism, seen also in *The Defence of Guenevere* (1858) by William Morris.

The earnest political use of the Middle Ages found in Carlyle and Ruskin did not die out—Morris himself continued it and linked it, in the 1880s, with Marxism. But these writers also used medieval settings as a context that made possible an uninhibited treatment of sex and violence. The shocking subject matter and vivid imagery of Morris's first volume were further developed by Algernon Charles Swinburne, who, in *Atalanta in Calydon* (1865) and *Poems and Ballads* (1866), combined them with an intoxicating metrical power. His second series of *Poems and Ballads* (1878), with its moving elegies for Charles Baudelaire and Théophile Gautier, displays a sophisticated command of recent developments in avant-garde

Robert Browning's experiments with the dramatic monologue were further developed in the 1860s by Augusta Webster, who used the form in *Dramatic Studies* (1866), *A Woman Sold and Other Poems* (1867), and *Portraits* (1870) to produce penetrating accounts of female experience. Her posthumously published sonnet sequence *Mother & Daughter* (1895) is a lucid and unsentimental account of that relationship.

The 1890s witnessed a flowering of lyric verse, influenced intellectually by the critic and novelist Walter Pater and formally by contemporary French practice. Such writing was widely attacked as "decadent" for its improper subject matter and its consciously amoral doctrine of "art for art's sake." This stress upon artifice and the freedom of art from conventional moral constraints went hand in hand, however, with an exquisite craftsmanship and a devotion to intense emotional and sensory effects. Outstanding among the numerous poets publishing in the final decade of the century were John Davidson, Arthur Symons, Francis Thompson, Ernest Dowson, Lionel Johnson, and A.E. Housman. In *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (1899), Symons suggested the links between this writing and European Symbolism and Impressionism. Thompson provides a vivid example of the way in which a decadent manner could, paradoxically, be combined with fierce religious enthusiasm. A rather different note was struck by Rudyard Kipling, who combined polemical force and sharp observation (particularly of colonial experience) with a remarkable metrical vigour.

The Victorian theatre:

Early Victorian drama was a popular art form, appealing to an uneducated audience that demanded emotional excitement rather than intellectual subtlety. Vivacious melodramas did not, however, hold exclusive possession of the stage. The mid-century saw lively comedies by Dion Boucicault and Tom Taylor. In the 1860s T.W. Robertson pioneered a new realist drama, an achievement later celebrated by Arthur Wing Pinero in his charming

sentimental comedy Trelawny of the “Wells” (1898). The 1890s were, however, the outstanding decade of dramatic innovation. Oscar Wilde crowned his brief career as a playwright with one of the few great high comedies in English, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895). At the same time, the influence of Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen was helping to produce a new genre of serious “problem plays,” such as Pinero’s *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* (1893). J.T. Grein founded the Independent Theatre in 1891 to foster such work and staged there the first plays of George Bernard Shaw and translations of Ibsen.

Victorian literary comedy:

Victorian literature began with such humorous books as *Sartor Resartus* and *The Pickwick Papers*. Despite the crisis of faith, the “Condition of England” question, and the “ache of modernism,” this note was sustained throughout the century. The comic novels of Dickens and Thackeray, the squibs, sketches, and light verse of Thomas Hood and Douglas Jerrold, the nonsense of Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll, and the humorous light fiction of Jerome K. Jerome and George Grossmith and his brother Weedon Grossmith are proof that this age, so often remembered for its gloomy rectitude, may in fact have been the greatest era of comic writing in English literature.

The 20th century opened with great hope but also with some apprehension, for the new century marked the final approach to a new millennium. For many, humankind was entering upon an unprecedented era. H.G. Wells’s utopian studies, the aptly titled *Anticipations of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress upon Human Life and Thought* (1901) and *A Modern Utopia* (1905), both captured and qualified this optimistic mood and gave expression to a common conviction that science and technology would transform the world in the century ahead. To achieve such transformation, outmoded institutions and ideals had to be replaced by ones more suited to the growth and liberation of the human spirit. The death of Queen Victoria in 1901 and the accession of Edward VII seemed to confirm that a franker, less inhibited era had begun.

Many writers of the Edwardian period, drawing widely upon the realistic and naturalistic conventions of the 19th century (upon Ibsen in drama and Balzac, Turgenev, Flaubert, Zola, Eliot, and Dickens in fiction) and in tune with the anti-Aestheticism unleashed by the trial of the archetypal Aesthete, Oscar Wilde, saw their task in the new century to be an unashamedly didactic one. In a series of wittily iconoclastic plays, of which *Man and Superman* (performed 1905, published 1903) and *Major Barbara* (performed 1905, published

1907) are the most substantial, George Bernard Shaw turned the Edwardian theatre into an arena for debate upon the principal concerns of the day: the question of political organization, the morality of armaments and war, the function of class and of the professions, the validity of the family and of marriage, and the issue of female emancipation. Nor was he alone in this, even if he was alone in the brilliance of his comedy. John Galsworthy made use of the theatre in *Strife* (1909) to explore the conflict between capital and labour, and in *Justice* (1910) he lent his support to reform of the penal system, while Harley Granville-Barker, whose revolutionary approach to stage direction did much to change theatrical production in the period, dissected in *The Voysey Inheritance* (performed 1905, published 1909) and *Waste* (performed 1907, published 1909) the hypocrisies and deceit of upper-class and professional life.

Many Edwardian novelists were similarly eager to explore the shortcomings of English social life. Wells—in *Love and Mr. Lewisham* (1900); *Kipps* (1905); *Ann Veronica* (1909), his pro-suffragist novel; and *The History of Mr. Polly* (1910)—captured the frustrations of lower- and middle-class existence, even though he relieved his accounts with many comic touches. In *Anna of the Five Towns* (1902), Arnold Bennett detailed the constrictions of provincial life among the self-made business classes in the area of England known as the Potteries; in *The Man of Property* (1906), the first volume of *The Forsyte Saga*, Galsworthy described the destructive possessiveness of the professional bourgeoisie; and, in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905) and *The Longest Journey* (1907), E.M. Forster portrayed with irony the insensitivity, self-repression, and philistinism of the English middle classes.

These novelists, however, wrote more memorably when they allowed themselves a larger perspective. In *The Old Wives' Tale* (1908), Bennett showed the destructive effects of time on the lives of individuals and communities and evoked a quality of pathos that he never matched in his other fiction; in *Tono-Bungay* (1909), Wells showed the ominous consequences of the uncontrolled developments taking place within a British society still dependent upon the institutions of a long-defunct landed aristocracy; and in *Howards End* (1910), Forster showed how little the rootless and self-important world of contemporary commerce cared for the more rooted world of culture, although he acknowledged that commerce was a necessary evil. Nevertheless, even as they perceived the difficulties of the present, most Edwardian novelists, like their counterparts in the theatre, held firmly to the belief not only that constructive change was possible but also that this change could in some measure be advanced by their writing.

Other writers, including Thomas Hardy and Rudyard Kipling, who had established their reputations during the previous century, and Hilaire Belloc, G.K. Chesterton, and Edward Thomas, who established their reputations in the first decade of the new century, were less confident about the future and sought to revive the traditional forms—the ballad, the narrative poem, the satire, the fantasy, the topographical poem, and the essay—that in their view preserved traditional sentiments and perceptions. The revival of traditional forms in the late 19th and early 20th century was not a unique event. There were many such revivals during the 20th century, and the traditional poetry of A.E. Housman (whose book *A Shropshire Lad*, originally published in 1896, enjoyed huge popular success during World War I), Walter de la Mare, John Masefield, Robert Graves, and Edmund Blunden represents an important and often neglected strand of English literature in the first half of the century.

The most significant writing of the period, traditionalist or modern, was inspired by neither hope nor apprehension but by bleaker feelings that the new century would witness the collapse of a whole civilization. The new century had begun with Great Britain involved in the South African War (the Boer War; 1899–1902), and it seemed to some that the British Empire was as doomed to destruction, both from within and from without, as had been the Roman Empire. In his poems on the South African War, Hardy (whose achievement as a poet in the 20th century rivaled his achievement as a novelist in the 19th) questioned simply and sardonically the human cost of empire building and established a tone and style that many British poets were to use in the course of the century, while Kipling, who had done much to engender pride in empire, began to speak in his verse and short stories of the burden of empire and the tribulations it would bring.

No one captured the sense of an imperial civilization in decline more fully or subtly than the expatriate American novelist Henry James. In *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), he had briefly anatomized the fatal loss of energy of the English ruling class and, in *The Princess Casamassima* (1886), had described more directly the various instabilities that threatened its paternalistic rule. He did so with regret: the patrician American admired in the English upper class its sense of moral obligation to the community. By the turn of the century, however, he had noted a disturbing change. In *The Spoils of Poynton* (1897) and *What Maisie Knew* (1897), members of the upper class no longer seem troubled by the means adopted to achieve their morally dubious ends. Great Britain had become indistinguishable from the other nations of the Old World, in which an ugly rapacity had never been far from the surface. James's dismay at this condition gave to his subtle and compressed late fiction, *The Wings of*

the Dove (1902), The Ambassadors (1903), and The Golden Bowl (1904), much of its gravity and air of disenchantment.

Another expatriate novelist, Joseph Conrad (pseudonym of Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski, born in the Ukraine of Polish parents), shared James's sense of crisis but attributed it less to the decline of a specific civilization than to human failings. Man was a solitary, romantic creature of will who at any cost imposed his meaning upon the world because he could not endure a world that did not reflect his central place within it. In *Almayer's Folly* (1895) and *Lord Jim* (1900), he had seemed to sympathize with this predicament; but in *Heart of Darkness* (1902), *Nostromo* (1904), *The Secret Agent* (1907), and *Under Western Eyes* (1911), he detailed such imposition, and the psychological pathologies he increasingly associated with it, without sympathy. He did so as a philosophical novelist whose concern with the mocking limits of human knowledge affected not only the content of his fiction but also its very structure. His writing itself is marked by gaps in the narrative, by narrators who do not fully grasp the significance of the events they are retelling, and by characters who are unable to make themselves understood. James and Conrad used many of the conventions of 19th-century realism but transformed them to express what are considered to be peculiarly 20th-century preoccupations and anxieties.

What is the Romantic movement in literature?

Romanticism (also the Romantic era or the Romantic period) is an artistic, literary, and intellectual movement that originated in Europe toward the end of the 18th century and was at its peak in the approximate period from 1800 to 1850. ... Feelings and sentiments are very much present in romantic works.

Why is the Romantic era important?

Romanticism was a major international movement that was influential in shaping modern views of art, literature, and music. It was at its height between 1798 and 1830. ... The romantics, in contrast, hoped to transform the world into a new Golden Age through the power of the imagination.

Who started the Romantic movement?

Many scholars say that the Romantic period began with the publication of "Lyrical Ballads" by William Wordsworth and Samuel Coleridge in 1798.

Who is called Romantic poet?

The best-known English Romantic poets include Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Keats, Byron and Shelley. In America, the most famous Romantic poet was Edgar Allan Poe; while in France, Victor Marie Hugo was the leading figure of the movement.

What is the role of imagination?

The Importance of Imagination. The ability to imagine things pervades our entire existence. It influences everything we do, think about and create. It leads to elaborate theories, dreams and inventions in any profession from the realms of academia to engineering and the arts.

UNIT 5

AGE OF HARDY (1887-1928)

INTRODUCTION:

The forty years between 1887 and 1928 are called the AGE OF HARDY, this is not intended to suggest that Hardy was in any special sense a spiritual or intellectual director during that time. He was much admired by his juniors as a man of outstanding and exceptional genius, but he was no modernist. The little geniuses have, commonly, no intelligent regard for the use of tradition: they themselves the power to create a new tradition.

From the beginning of the eighteenth century and the end of the nineties the great Victorian writers devoted themselves to a literature of purposes. In the last decade of the century a new group of authors and artists set out to demonstrate that 'all art is useless' in the sense of being free from allegiance to ideas of morality and standards of conduct. OSCAR WILDE, the foremost of this group, was attracted by the theories of Walter Pater, who with surprise and reluctance found himself adopted as the mentor of Aesthetic Movement.

The best qualities of the decadents and the worst were personified in Wilde and illustrate by his work. It would be superfluous in this brief survey. Some decadents during the period of the Age of Hardy are AUBREY Beardsley.

Irish writers were especially important in the twentieth-century, including James Joyce and later Samuel Beckett, both central figures in the Modernist movement. Americans, like poets T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound and novelist William Faulkner, were other important

modernists. British modernists include Joseph Conrad, E. M. Forster, Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf, and D. H. Lawrence. In the mid-twentieth-century major writers started to appear in the various countries of the British Commonwealth, including several Nobel laureates.

In the early 20th-century literary modernism developed in the English-speaking world due to a general sense of disillusionment with the Victorian era attitudes of certainty, conservatism, and belief in the idea of objective truth. The movement was influenced by the ideas of Charles Darwin (1809–82) (*On Origin of Species*) (1859), Ernst Mach (1838–1916), Henri Bergson (1859–1941), Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), James G. Frazer (1854–1941), Karl Marx (1818–83) (*Das Kapital*, 1867), and the psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), among others. The continental art movements of Impressionism, and later Cubism, were also important inspirations for modernist writers. Important literary precursors of modernism, were: Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821–81) (*Crime and Punishment* (1866), *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880)); Walt Whitman (1819–92) (*Leaves of Grass*) (1855–91); Charles Baudelaire (1821–67) (*Les Fleurs du mal*), Rimbaud (1854–91) (*Illuminations*, 1874); August Strindberg (1849–1912), especially his later plays.

A major British lyric poet of the first decades of the 20th century was Thomas Hardy (1840–1928). Though not a modernist, Hardy was an important transitional figure between the Victorian era and the 20th century. A major novelist of the late 19th century, Hardy, after the adverse criticism of his last novel, *Jude the Obscure*, concentrated on publishing poetry. On the other hand, another significant transitional figure between Victorians and modernists, the late-19th-century novelist, Henry James (1843–1916), continued to publish major works into the 20th century. James, born in the US, lived in Europe from 1875, and became a British citizen in 1915.[5] Another immigrant, Polish-born modernist novelist Joseph Conrad (1857–1924) published his first important work, *Heart of Darkness*, in 1899 and *Lord Jim* in 1900. The American exponent of Naturalism Theodore Dreiser's (1871–1945) *Sister Carrie* was also published in 1900.

Poetry:

However, the Victorian Gerard Manley Hopkins's (1844–89) highly original poetry was not published until 1918, long after his death, while the career of another major modernist poet, Irishman W. B. Yeats (1865–1939), began late in the Victorian era. Yeats was one of the foremost figures of 20th-century literature. A pillar of both the Irish and

British literary establishments, in his later years he served as an Irish Senator for two terms. Yeats was a driving force behind the Irish Literary Revival. In 1923 he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, the first Irishman so honoured. Yeats is generally considered [by whom?] one of the few writers who completed their greatest works after being awarded the Nobel Prize: these works include *The Tower* (1928) and *The Winding Stair and Other Poems* (1929).

In addition to W. B. Yeats other important early modernist poets were the American poets T. S. Eliot (1888–1965) and Ezra Pound (1885–1972). Eliot became a British citizen in 1927 but was born and educated in America. His most famous works are: "Prufrock" (1915), *The Wasteland* (1921) and *Four Quartets* (1935–42). Ezra Pound was not only a major poet, first publishing part of *The Cantos* in 1917, but an important mentor for other poets, most significantly in his editorial advice for Eliot's poem *The Wasteland*. Other important American poets writing early in the 20th century were William Carlos Williams (1883–1963), Robert Frost (1874–1963), who published his first collection in England in 1913, and H.D. (1886–1961). Gertrude Stein (1874–1946), an American expatriate living in Paris, famous for her line "Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose," was also an important literary force during this time period. American poet Marianne Moore (1887–1972) published from the 1920s to the 1960s.

But while modernism was to become an important literary movement in the early decades of the new century, there were also many fine writers who, like Thomas Hardy, were not modernists. During the early decades of the 20th century the Georgian poets like Rupert Brooke (1887–1915), Walter de la Mare (1873–1956), and John Masefield (1878–1967, Poet Laureate from 1930) maintained a conservative approach to poetry by combining romanticism, sentimentality and hedonism, sandwiched as they were between the Victorian era, with its strict classicism, and Modernism, with its strident rejection of pure aestheticism. Edward Thomas (1878–1917) is sometimes treated as another Georgian poet.[9] Thomas enlisted in 1915 and is one of the First World War poets along with Wilfred Owen (1893–1918), Rupert Brooke (1887–1915), Isaac Rosenberg (1890–1917), Edmund Blunden (1896–1974) and Siegfried Sassoon (1886–1967).

Drama:

Irish playwrights George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950) and J.M. Synge (1871–1909) were influential in British drama. Shaw's career began in the last decade of the 19th century,

while Synge's plays belong to the first decade of the 20th century. Synge's most famous play, *The Playboy of the Western World*, "caused outrage and riots when it was first performed" in Dublin in 1907.[10] George Bernard Shaw turned the Edwardian theatre into an arena for debate about important political and social issues, like marriage, class, "the morality of armaments and war" and the rights of women. An important dramatist in the 1920s, and later, was Irishman Seán O'Casey (1880–1964). Also in the 1920s and later Noël Coward (1899–1973) achieved enduring success as a playwright, publishing more than 50 plays from his teens onwards. Many of his works, such as *Hay Fever* (1925), *Private Lives* (1930), *Design for Living* (1932), *Present Laughter* (1942) and *Blithe Spirit* (1941), have remained in the regular theatre repertoire.

Novelists:

Amongst the novelists, after Joseph Conrad, other important early modernists include Dorothy Richardson (1873–1957), whose novel *Pointed Roof* (1915), is one of the earliest example of the stream of consciousness technique, and D. H. Lawrence (1885–1930), who published *The Rainbow* in 1915, though it was immediately seized by the police.[12] Then in 1922 Irishman James Joyce's important modernist novel *Ulysses* appeared. *Ulysses* has been called "a demonstration and summation of the entire movement".[13] Set during one day in Dublin, in it Joyce creates parallels with Homer's epic poem the *Odyssey*. William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) is another significant modernist novel, that uses the stream of consciousness technique.

Another major work of science fiction, from the early 20th century, is *A Voyage to Arcturus* by Scottish writer David Lindsay, first published in 1920. It combines fantasy, philosophy, and science fiction in an exploration of the nature of good and evil and their relationship with existence. It has been described by writer Colin Wilson as the "greatest novel of the twentieth century", and was a central influence on C. S. Lewis's *Space Trilogy*.

The most popular British writer of the early years of the 20th century was arguably Rudyard Kipling, a highly versatile writer of novels, short stories and poems, and to date the youngest ever recipient of the Nobel Prize for Literature (1907). Kipling's works include *The Jungle Books* (1894–95), *The Man Who Would Be King* and *Kim* (1901), while his inspirational poem "If—" (1895) is a national favourite and a memorable evocation of Victorian stoicism. Kipling's reputation declined during his lifetime, but more recently postcolonial studies has "rekindled an intense interest in his work, viewing it as both

symptomatic and critical of imperialist attitudes". Strongly influenced by his Christian faith, G. K. Chesterton was a prolific and hugely influential writer with a diverse output. His best-known character is the priest-detective Father Brown, who appeared only in short stories, while *The Man Who Was Thursday* published in 1908 is arguably his best-known novel. Of his nonfiction, *Charles Dickens: A Critical Study* (1906) has received some of the broadest-based praise.

Hardy (2 June 1840 – 11 January Thomas 1928):

He was an English novelist and poet. A Victorian realist in the tradition of George Eliot, he was influenced both in his novels and in his poetry by Romanticism, especially William Wordsworth. He was highly critical of much in Victorian society, especially on the declining status of rural people in Britain, such as those from his native South West England.

While Hardy wrote poetry throughout his life and regarded himself primarily as a poet, his first collection was not published until 1898. Initially, therefore, he gained fame as the author of novels such as *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), and *Jude the Obscure* (1895). During his lifetime, Hardy's poetry was acclaimed by younger poets (particularly the Georgians) who viewed him as a mentor. After his death his poems were lauded by Ezra Pound, W. H. Auden and Philip Larkin.

Many of his novels concern tragic characters struggling against their passions and social circumstances, and they are often set in the semi-fictional region of Wessex; initially based on the medieval Anglo-Saxon kingdom, Hardy's Wessex eventually came to include the counties of Dorset, Wiltshire, Somerset, Devon, Hampshire and much of Berkshire, in southwest and south central England. Two of his novels, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Far from the Madding Crowd*, were listed in the top 50 on the BBC's survey *The Big Read*.

THE PRESENT AGE (1930- 1955)

Gerard Manley Hopkins:

He was an English poet and Jesuit priest, whose posthumous fame established him among the leading Victorian poets. His manipulation of prosody – particularly his concept of sprung rhythm and use of imagery – established him as an innovative writer of verse. Two of

his major themes were nature and religion. Only after his death did Robert Bridges begin to publish a few of Hopkins's mature poems in anthologies, hoping to prepare the way for wider acceptance of his style. By 1930 his work was recognised as being among the most original literary accomplishments of his century. It had a marked influence on such leading 20th-century poets as T. S. Eliot, Dylan Thomas, W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender and Cecil Day-Lewis.

Until 1875, however, he kept a journal recording his vivid responses to nature as well as his expression of a philosophy for which he later found support in Duns Scotus, the medieval Franciscan thinker. Hopkins' philosophy emphasized the individuality of every natural thing, which he called "inscape." To Hopkins, each sensuous impression had its own elusive "selfness"; each scene was to him a "sweet especial scene."

Thomas Stearns Eliot (26 September 1888 – 4 January 1965):

He was a poet, essayist, publisher, playwright, and literary critic. Born in St. Louis, Missouri, to a prominent Boston Brahmin family, he moved to England in 1914 at the age of 25 and went on to settle, work and marry there. He became a British subject in 1927 at the age of 39, subsequently renouncing his American citizenship.

Considered one of the twentieth century's major poets, Eliot attracted widespread attention for his poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1915), which was seen as a masterpiece of the Modernist movement. It was followed by some of the best-known poems in the English language, including *The Waste Land* (1922), "The Hollow Men" (1925), "Ash Wednesday" (1930), and *Four Quartets* (1943).[4] He was also known for his seven plays, particularly *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935) and *The Cocktail Party* (1949). He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1948, "for his outstanding, pioneer contribution to present-day poetry".

William Butler Yeats (13 June 1865 – 28 January 1939):

He was an Irish poet and one of the foremost figures of 20th-century literature. A pillar of the Irish literary establishment, he helped to found the Abbey Theatre, and in his later years served two terms as a Senator of the Irish Free State. He was a driving force behind the Irish Literary Revival along with Lady Gregory, Edward Martyn and others.

Yeats was born in Sandymount, Ireland, and educated there and in London. He spent childhood holidays in County Sligo and studied poetry from an early age, when he became

fascinated by Irish legends and the occult. These topics feature in the first phase of his work, which lasted roughly until the turn of the 20th century. His earliest volume of verse was published in 1889, and its slow-paced and lyrical poems display debts to Edmund Spenser, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and the poets of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. From 1900, his poetry grew more physical and realistic. He largely renounced the transcendental beliefs of his youth, though he remained preoccupied with physical and spiritual masks, as well as with cyclical theories of life. In 1923, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature.

David Herbert Lawrence (11 September 1885 – 2 March 1930):

He was an English writer and poet. His collected works represent, among other things, an extended reflection upon the dehumanising effects of modernity and industrialisation. Some of the issues Lawrence explores are sexuality, emotional health, vitality, spontaneity, and instinct.

Lawrence's opinions earned him many enemies and he endured official persecution, censorship, and misrepresentation of his creative work throughout the second half of his life, much of which he spent in a voluntary exile he called his "savage pilgrimage". At the time of his death, his public reputation was that of a pornographer who had wasted his considerable talents. E. M. Forster, in an obituary notice, challenged this widely held view, describing him as "the greatest imaginative novelist of our generation." Later, the literary critic F. R. Leavis championed both his artistic integrity and his moral seriousness.

G.B.Shaw:

George Bernard Shaw (26 July 1856 – 2 November 1950) was an Irish playwright and a co-founder of the London School of Economics. Although his first profitable writing was music and literary criticism, in which capacity he wrote many highly articulate pieces of journalism, his main talent was for drama, and he wrote more than 60 plays. He was also an essayist, novelist and short story writer. Nearly all his writings address prevailing social problems with a vein of comedy which makes their stark themes more palatable. Issues which engaged Shaw's attention included education, marriage, religion, government, health care, and class privilege.

He was most angered by what he perceived as the exploitation of the working class. An ardent socialist, Shaw wrote many brochures and speeches for the Fabian Society. He

became an accomplished orator in the furtherance of its causes, which included gaining equal rights for men and women, alleviating abuses of the working class, rescinding private ownership of productive land, and promoting healthy lifestyles. For a short time he was active in local politics, serving on the London County Council.

In 1898, Shaw married Charlotte Payne-Townshend, a fellow Fabian, whom he survived. They settled in Ayot St Lawrence in a house now called Shaw's Corner. Shaw died there, aged 94, from chronic problems exacerbated by injuries he incurred by falling from a ladder.

He is the only person to have been awarded both a Nobel Prize in Literature (1925) and an Academy Award (1938), for his contributions to literature and for his work on the film *Pygmalion* (an adaptation of his play of the same name), respectively.[n 1] Shaw turned down all other awards and honours, including the offer of a knighthood.

Robert bridges:

Bridges was born in Walmer, Kent, in the UK, and educated at Eton College and Corpus Christi College, Oxford.[1] He went on to study medicine in London at St Bartholomew's Hospital, intending to practise until the age of forty and then retire to write poetry.

He practised as a casualty physician at his teaching hospital (where he made a series of highly critical remarks about the Victorian medical establishment) and subsequently as a full physician to the Great (later Royal) Northern Hospital. He was also a physician to the Hospital for Sick Children.

Lung disease forced him to retire in 1882, and from that point on he devoted himself to writing and literary research. However, Bridges' literary work started long before his retirement, his first collection of poems having been published in 1873. In 1884 he married Monica Waterhouse, daughter of Alfred Waterhouse R.A., and spent the rest of his life in rural seclusion, first at Yattendon, Berkshire, then at Boars Hill, Oxford, where he died.

He was elected to the Fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians of London in 1900. He was appointed Poet Laureate in 1913, the only medical graduate to have held the office.

Virginia Woolf (25 January 1882 – 28 March 1941):

She was an English writer, considered one of the most important modernist 20th-century authors and also a pioneer in the use of stream of consciousness as a narrative device.

Woolf was born into an affluent household in South Kensington, London, the seventh child in a blended family of eight. Her mother, Julia Prinsep Jackson, celebrated as a Pre-Raphaelite artist's model, had three children from her first marriage, while Woolf's father, Leslie Stephen, a notable man of letters, had one previous daughter. The Stephens produced another four children, including the modernist painter Vanessa Bell. While the boys in the family received college educations, the girls were home-schooled in English classics and Victorian literature. An important influence in Virginia Woolf's early life was the summer home the family used in St Ives, Cornwall, where she first saw the Godrevy Lighthouse, which was to become central in her novel *To the Lighthouse* (1927).

In 1912, she married Leonard Woolf, and in 1917 the couple founded the Hogarth Press, which published much of her work. They rented a home in Sussex and moved there permanently in 1940. Throughout her life, Woolf was troubled by her mental illness. She was institutionalised several times and attempted suicide at least twice. Her illness may have been bipolar disorder, for which there was no effective intervention during her lifetime. In 1941, at age 59, Woolf died by putting rocks in her coat pockets and drowning herself in the River Ouse at Lewes.

During the interwar period, Woolf was an important part of London's literary and artistic society. In 1915 she published her first novel, *The Voyage Out*, through her half-brother's publishing house, Gerald Duckworth and Company. Her best-known works include the novels *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and *Orlando* (1928). She is also known for her essays, including *A Room of One's Own* (1929), in which she wrote the much-quoted dictum, "A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction."

Woolf became one of the central subjects of the 1970s movement of feminist criticism and her works have since garnered much attention and widespread commentary for "inspiring feminism." Her works have been translated into more than 50 languages. A large body of literature is dedicated to her life and work, and she has been the subject of plays, novels and films. Woolf is commemorated today by statues, societies dedicated to her work and a building at the University of London.

Wystan Hugh Auden (21 February 1907 – 29 September 1973):

He was a British-American poet. Auden's poetry was noted for its stylistic and technical achievement, its engagement with politics, morals, love, and religion, and its variety in tone, form and content. Some of his best known poems are about love, such as "Funeral Blues"; on political and social themes, such as "September 1, 1939" and "The Shield of Achilles"; on cultural and psychological themes, such as *The Age of Anxiety*; and on religious themes such as "For the Time Being" and "Horae Canonicae".

He came to wide public attention with his first book *Poems* at the age of twenty-three in 1930; it was followed in 1932 by *The Orators*. Three plays written in collaboration with Christopher Isherwood between 1935 and 1938 built his reputation as a left-wing political writer. Auden moved to the United States partly to escape this reputation, and his work in the 1940s, including the long poems "For the Time Being" and "The Sea and the Mirror", focused on religious themes. He won the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry for his 1947 long poem *The Age of Anxiety*, the title of which became a popular phrase describing the modern era. From 1956 to 1961 he was Professor of Poetry at Oxford; his lectures were popular with students and faculty, and served as the basis for his 1962 prose collection *The Dyer's Hand*.

Auden and Isherwood maintained a lasting but intermittent sexual friendship from around 1927 to 1939, while both had briefer but more intense relations with other men. In 1939, Auden fell in love with Chester Kallman and regarded their relationship as a marriage, but this ended in 1941 when Kallman refused to accept the faithful relations that Auden demanded. However, the two maintained their friendship, and from 1947 until Auden's death they lived in the same house or apartment in a non-sexual relationship, often collaborating on opera libretti such as that of *The Rake's Progress*, to music by Igor Stravinsky.

Auden was a prolific writer of prose essays and reviews on literary, political, psychological, and religious subjects, and he worked at various times on documentary films, poetic plays, and other forms of performance. Throughout his career he was both controversial and influential, and critical views on his work ranged from sharply dismissive—treating him as a lesser figure than W. B. Yeats and T. S. Eliot—to strongly affirmative, as in Joseph Brodsky's statement that he had "the greatest mind of the twentieth century". After his death, his poems became known to a much wider public than during his lifetime through films, broadcasts, and popular media.

Philip Arthur Larkin (9 August 1922 – 2 December 1985):

He was an English poet, novelist, and librarian. His first book of poetry, *The North Ship*, was published in 1945, followed by two novels, *Jill* (1946) and *A Girl in Winter* (1947), and he came to prominence in 1955 with the publication of his second collection of poems, *The Less Deceived*, followed by *The Whitsun Weddings* (1964) and *High Windows* (1974). He contributed to *The Daily Telegraph* as its jazz critic from 1961 to 1971, articles gathered in *All What Jazz: A Record Diary 1961–71* (1985), and he edited *The Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse* (1973). His many honours include the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry. He was offered, but declined, the position of Poet Laureate in 1984, following the death of Sir John Betjeman.

Despite the controversy Larkin was chosen in a 2003 Poetry Book Society survey, almost two decades after his death, as Britain's best-loved poet of the previous 50 years, and in 2008 *The Times* named him Britain's greatest post-war writer.

In 1973 a *Coventry Evening Telegraph* reviewer referred to Larkin as "the bard of Coventry", but in 2010, 25 years after his death, it was Larkin's adopted home city, Kingston upon Hull, that commemorated him with the Larkin 25 Festival which culminated in the unveiling of a statue of Larkin by Martin Jennings on 2 December 2010, the 25th anniversary of his death. On 2 December 2016, the 31st anniversary of his death, a floor stone memorial for Larkin was unveiled at Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey.

What was made in 1950?

1950s. In the post war America of the 1950s, many changes for consumers were afoot. New on the scene in this decade: credit cards, power steering, diet soft drinks, music synthesizers, and transistor radios.

What is TS Eliot most famous poem?

Eliot is best known: "The Wasteland" and "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." The second of these was published in 1915. The first in 1922. Two other famous poems are: "Ash Wednesday" and "The Hollow Men."

Who is the best poet in English literature?

William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Shakespeare, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Percy Shelley, John Keats, Lord Byron, Rabindranath Tagore.

Who is called the poet of poets in English literature?

Edmund Spenser was first called the "Poet's Poet" by the English essayist Charles Lamb.

What is Yeats most famous poem?

The Stolen Child was written in 1886 when Yeats was only 21. It is the most famous poem of his first published poetry collection *The Wanderings of Oisín and Other Poems*; and is regarded as one of his most important early works.

Who published Hopkins poems after his death?

In 1889, just five years after being appointed professor of Classics at UCD, Hopkins died from typhoid. After his death, Robert Bridges helped to publish and promote his friend's work, editing a volume of Hopkins' Poems that first appeared in 1918.

Who is called an Irish poet?

Irish poet, dramatist, and prose writer William Butler Yeats was the preeminent writer of the Irish literary renaissance at the turn of the 20th century. He was also an important figure in European literary Modernism in the 1920s and '30s.

What is Virginia Woolf most famous for?

She was best known for her novels, especially *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) and *To the Lighthouse* (1927). She also wrote pioneering essays on artistic theory, literary history, women's writing, and the politics of power.

What is DH Lawrence best known for?

D.H. Lawrence is best known for his infamous novel *'Lady Chatterley's Lover,'* which was banned in the United States until 1959. He is widely regarded as one of the most influential writers of the 20th century.

What is WH Auden famous for?

Auden was a leading literary influencer in the 20th century. Known for his chameleon-like ability to write poems in almost every verse form, Auden's travels in countries torn by political strife influenced his early works. He won the Pulitzer Prize in 1948.