

Cauvery College for Women (Autonomous)

Nationally Accredited (III Cycle) with 'A' Grade by NAAC

Annamalai Nagar, Tiruchirappalli-18.



Name of the Faculty : Ms. N. Yoga
Designation : Assistant Professor
Department : English
Major : II B.A English
Batch : 2016-2017 Onwards
Semester : IV
Course : History of English Literature II
Unit : V
Topics Covered : Age of Hardy and Present Age
Course code : 16AACEN4
Mobile Number : 9942424608

THE AGE OF HARDY

(1887-1928)

The Decadents of the 1890's:

From the beginning to end of the Victorians devoted themselves to a literature of purpose. During the 1890's a new group of writers began to demonstrate that "all art is useless". They wanted to be free from following ideas of morality and standards of conduct. These writers are generally called the Decadents.

Oscar Wilde, the foremost of the group, was attracted by the theories of Walter Pater, who advocated a philosophy of life arising from the cultivation of passion. With the young "decadents", this philosophy developed into the pursuit of pure sensation, divorced from moral control. Oscar Wilde lived a life of sensation. He was arrested and put in prison.

Wilde was a poet, novelist and a dramatist. As a dramatist, he wrote a series of comedies on manners. The best among his plays is "The Importance of Being Earnest", which shows his brilliant wit and sparkling dialogue. His style is an elaborated and decorated one.

Intention is the prose-work of Oscar Wilde. It is a series of dialogues on literature and the arts-with dissertations on lying, poison and masks. His poems are not very popular. There is something of Byron in his poetry. He is incapable of absolute sincerity and simplicity.

Aubrey Beardsley and Charles Conder are the two others who brought out the characteristics of the period through the portraits. Arthur Symonds used the symbolistic style of the modern French Poetry. Ernest Dowson was another hectic poet. Lionel Johnson was the true poet on the fringe of the decadent movement, but free from its extravagances. John Davidson was the author of four long poems ending with "The Testament of John Davidson".

Two periodicals were founded for the publication of writings- The Yellow Book and The Savoy. These magazines should be referred to by those who want to understand the features of the point and the writings of the decadents.

Life and Works of Thomas Hardy:

The forty years between 1887 and 1928 are called the Age of Hardy. Though Hardy was not a great spiritual leader of intellectual director, he was admired by the juniors as a man of outstanding genius. At the death of Tennyson in 1892, there was no dominant writer to represent the sentiments of the Victorians to the nation. The minor writers either imitated slavishly or revolted arrogantly.

Hardy was born in the country of Dorset in 1840. His father was a builder. Much of his youth was spent in the countryside where he began to study with an architect. With the publication of his sensational novel *Desperate Remedies*, he became popular as a writer. Soon he abandoned architecture for literature as a profession. In 1910 he was awarded the Order of Merit. He died in 1928.

Hardy's Novels

Hardy was a novelist and a poet. *Under the Greenwood Tree*, one of the lightest of his novels, was set in the rural area. He was to make famous as Wessex. The first of great novels, *Far from the Madding Crowd* was a tragicomedy set in Wessex. *The Return of the Native* was a study of man's helplessness before the all-powerful fate. *The Trumpet Major*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *The Woodlanders*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, *Jude the Obscure* were Hardy's famous novels. In the last two novels we have the most moving of Hardy's studies of human nature.

Hardy's Poetry:

Hardy began as a poet and continued to write poems. *The Dynasts* is an epic drama. But, much of Hardy's verse consists of short lyrics. He shows great technical care and love of experimentation. *Wessex Poems* includes collections of his poems. *The Dynasts* is a masterly example of Hardy's genius in the organization and control of literary material, Hardy holds that there is no active intelligence, no just and living God behind human destiny.

Features of Hardy's Novels:

In all his works Hardy presents human beings facing up to the onslaughts of a mysterious power. His mood is one of pessimism. Very often in his novels happiness becomes "the occasional episode in a general drama of pain".

Hardy's characters are mostly ordinary men and women, representing his philosophy of life. Many of his characters are created with the fullness, vigour and assurance of a Shakespeare or a Dickens.

He has also created some of the unforgettable places in his novels. Egdon Heath in *The Return of the Native*, Blackmoor Vale in *Tess* or the tree-girt solitude of *The Woodlanders* are unique. They are as memorable as his characters.

In the use of tragedy, Hardy can be compared with the great figures in world literature. He falls short of their stature chiefly because he pursues his afflicted characters past the limits at which both art and nature are satisfied to half. In the use of pathos, he is unsurpassed.

Finally, Thomas Hardy's novels and poems are the work of a writer painfully dissatisfied with the age in which he lived. Hardy again, distrusted modern civilization because he suspected that its effect was frequently to decivilize and weaken people.

Contribution of the Poets of Transition(1892-1913):

The twenty years from 1892 to 1913 are generally treated as a transition period. People began to read poetry again. Alfred Austin became the poet laureate of England. He was a political journalist who wanted to become a philosophical poet.

Among the Transitional poets, there were poets who wrote on patriotism and imperialism. W.E. Henley was a poet editor and critic. His patriotic poems are included in an anthology called *Lyra Heroica* and another volume called *For England's Sake*. He wrote free-verse stanzas.

William Watson is a little too good to be included with minor poets. His best echoes the tradition of the past. His patriotic lyrics as well as his ceremonial and occasional poems show a sense of order and proportion.

Rudyard Kipling is an impressive writer. His soldier tales and poems succeed in giving the modestly heroic impression of the British soldier. His other poems, which express a quite love of England, have the marks of good poetry. They have restraint, imagery and varied music.

Alfred Noyes's poetry has the music and pictorial quality that give immediate pleasure. But according to general critical opinion, Noyes failed to provide the 'permanent' satisfaction. Which is a major function of poetry.

Three poets stand apart from the rest of the transition poets, A.E Houseman, Francis Thompson and Robert Bridges. The life of Francis Thompson was a kind of a comic-tragedy of drugs, poverty and suffering. He was not able to adjust himself to even the demands of everyday life. He was rescued by Wilfrid and Alice Meynel. He published three collection of poems, which include "The Hound of Heaven", "Ode to the Setting Sun" and "Poems on Children". "The Hound of Heaven" is a unique poetic creation, which deals with the endlessly pursuing love of God.

A.E Houseman published only two small books of verse-"A Shropshire Lad" and "last Poems". The predominant mood in his poems is cultured, ironical disillusionment with life. They are tragic in tone, concise, epigrammatic in expression; yet it is always easy to understand.

Robert Bridges was a surgeon until he was forty; he cultivated his love for poetry and learning in seclusion. He wrote a series of verse dramas and masques and slowly became popular by his lyrics like "the Growth of Love" and "Eros and Psyche". His lengthy philosophical poem, "The Testament of Beauty" was received with admiration. It is felt that he would have become famous if he had left a message for the people. (He was appointed Poet Laureate in 1913).

The Revival of Poetry in the early 20th century:

When Robert Bridges became the Poet Laureate several young poets tried to popularize poetry. An Anthology of Poetry was published in 1913 with the title Georgian Poetry. This became an immediate success. The First World War gave a new inspiration and new War Poetry began and lasted until peace came. The war poetry was interesting and exciting, during the war period.

Rupert Brooke himself was a real poet. He died in war as a soldier. His Collected Poems include some remarkable and memorable poems, the 1914 sonnets, "The Great Lover", "The Old Vicarage, Grandchester". Among the other war poets, Julian Grenfell and Siegfried Sassoon may be singled out. In Grenfell we find the most sincere expression to courageous idealism and in Sassoon, there is a "war of pen against the machine gun".

Among a host of other Georgian poets, we have to mention only a few who stand above the general level. Ralph Hodgson's "The Bull", "The Song of Honour", "Eve" and "The Gipsy Girl" are remarkable for strength, imaginative force, music and masterly concentration. John Masefield passed from sea songs and ballad, to narrative poems combining vigour of diction with religious favour and an austere conception of the native of beauty. But, however, Masefield is not a very good craftsman. His most satisfying poems are "Saltwater Ballads", "Reynard, The Fox", "Biography" and "August 1914". In both narrative and lyric poems his vitality and simple style have a definite appeal, but he rarely touches the deeper level of human experience.

George Bernard Shaw as a Dramatist:

During the eighties and the nineties, a new type of drama became popular, known as the "problem play" or "drama of ideas". T.W. Robertson inspired A.A. Pinero and Henry Arthur Jones contributed to this form. The two were very good craftsmen. Jones was less popular than Pinero but he was a better dramatist. Their dramatic situations were more artificial than real. It is George Bernard Shaw who brought life into the drama.

Bernard Shaw brought about a revolution in the drama. His earliest plays are not very interesting. Through local politics and journalism, he imposed himself upon the theatre. His main aim was the establishment of righteousness in social relationships. Therefore, life problems like housing conditions, religion, finance, prostitution etc. came to be discussed in his plays. The stage became a tool in the hands of Shaw to criticise the contemporary civilization. He learnt how to organize the living materials for the stage.

Gradually Shaw developed from a propagandist to a playwright with real problems and nearly real people. In *Man and Superman* he presented his philosophic idea of the life force. Woman is selected as the willing instrument in the means for evolving the superman. In *Back to Methuselah*, the life force merges into his larger theory of creative evolution, signifying the idea of man, made perfect through the will to be made perfect. Shaw's fundamental aim in his drama was the bettering of the lot of humanity.

Wit is the very essence of Shavian comedy. His sense of fun is undying but at the same time, there is a serious purpose underlying his fun.

Again Shaw has created a great variety of his characters. His characters are largely seen as products of social forces or representatives of ideas. Some are mere mouthpieces for his theories; some others are projection of his own personality.

Shaw's dialogues are of the highest order. Shaw was a brilliant talker and he used this gift to a great advantage in his plays. His dramatic technique is superb. He has become a legend in the literary world.

Contribution of the Irish Poets and Dramatists:

For nearly ten years W.B. Yeats, the son of an Irish painter tried to create the Irish National Theatre. A new brilliant period of Irish Drama began. Yeats himself contributed many poetic plays like *The Land of Heart's Desire* and *The Countess Cathleen*. His genius was more poetic than dramatic.

George William Russell was another outstanding personality in modern Irish literature. He wrote under a penname 'AE' and became famous as poet, dramatist, essayist and editor. He also performed valuable services in agricultural reform and was famous throughout Ireland.

The Irish National Theatre attracted capable new dramatists. J.M. Synge authored *The Playboy of the Western World* and *Riders to the Sea*. Sean O'Casey became well known for two plays-*Juno and the Paycock* and *The Plough and the Stars*. Lady Gregory was drawn to the theatre by W.B. Yeats. She contributed well-observed little plays of modern Irish life and character-*Seven Short Plays*. She also wrote the history of the modern Irish drama called, *Our Irish Theatre*.

J.M. Barrie deals with fantasy. He is a pessimist, who takes refuge from the ugliness of modern life in a world of delicate sentiment and make-believe. *The Admirable Crichton* is his most popular play. His other popular work is *Peter Pan*. Lewis Carroll's creation of *Alice in 1865* is a work of genius, which can be considered a companion of *Peter Pan*.

John Galsworthy wrote excellent plays like *Strife*, *The Silver Box* and *The Skin Game*. Harley Granville-Barker wrote one superlatively good social comedy, *The Voysey Inheritance*. It was actually the best naturalistic play of the period. *Milestones* by Arnold Bennett and Edward Knoblock is a fascinating study in the dynamics of progress. John Masefield wrote *Pompey the Great*, *The Tragedy of Nan* and *Good Friday*, which are considered good examples of modern tragic drama.

Contribution of the Novelists of Transition:

The English novel during the 19th century was predominantly romantic in tone. From 1885 onwards, there came some novelists whose aim was to treat 'realistic' themes 'realistically' - in a dispassionate, non-sentimental manner. The new realists mistook mere ugliness for frankness. *Esther Waters* by George Moore was a landmark in this movement towards aesthetic realism.

George Gissing wrote a number of grim novels representing life as he had observed. His novels are disgruntled. But for the weak self-pity, he would have been considered one of the major 19th century novelists. His *Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* is a fine book of reflections in fine prose. Later Gissing moved from realism to historical. His *The Brook Kerith* is a masterpiece dealing with the legend that Jesus lived among the Essene community.

Rudyard Kipling was a powerful short story writer of the traditional type. He was the master of many moods passion with assurance and ease to fantasy. He widened the range fiction with his stories of machinery and of animals. *Kim* is a popular novel like *Pickwick Papers* of Dickens.

Stanley Weyman and Maurice Hewlett wrote some go historical novels at the end of the transition period. Weyman's *A Gentleman of France*, *The House of the Wolf* and Hewietts *Richard Yea-and Nay* and *The Queen's Quail* are good examples. Anthony Hope's *The Prisoner of Zenda* is a pleasing product of the Romantic imagination. Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes* has become immortal.

Development of Novel in the Early 20th Century:

After the death of Charles Dickens, Meredith and Hardy were the custodians of the English novelistic tradition. The transitional novelists were not within the tradition directly. During the early part of the 20th century, young novelists began to produce good novels.

i.) **H.G. Wells** produced fantastic romances like *The Time Machine* through which he criticised institutions and constitutions. *Love and Mr. Lewisham*, *Kipps* and *The History of Mr. Polly* established him as a novelist of good quality with a special genius for comedy and humanitarian zeal. *Tono-Bungay* is ranked as Well's best novel, in which characterization, narration, description and adventure are beautifully interwoven. According to Wells, the novel should not merely entertain

the readers, but should serve as a platform for the propagation of ideas and to criticise the contemporary society and politics.

ii. **Joseph Conrad** came as a youth from Poland to serve France and later on British Ships, learned English language on and then settled in England to write the best sea stories in English *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, *Typhoon* etc. His novels are not merely sea-stories but good psychological studies. He was the first novelist in English to make the novel a work of art. The intensity and the spiritual depth make the novels unique. His narrative method is involved and peculiar which helps him to convey the intimate aspects of character and theme. *Lord Jim* is a poetic tragedy. He sets a very high value on the exactitude of observation and reproduction. A unifying idea—the imperative need for loyalty to a human principle runs through all his novels and tales. Men are united on the sea by the threat of a common peril—the treachery of the ocean. Human solidarity must be maintained against this enemy. The idea of human solidarity is insistent in all his works.

iii. **Arnold Bennett** wrote *The Old Wife's Tale*, *Clayhanger*, and *Riceyman Steps*. **Galsworthy** wrote *The Forsyte Saga*. With these two the major traditional novels come to an end. These two novelists gave large-scale pictures of different social types in the contemporary England. Bennett described the middleclass people in trade and industry. Galsworthy described the professional and aristocratic classes. They chose corresponding literary styles. Arnold wrote the first rate humorous novel, *Buried Alive*, which was successfully dramatised with the new title *The Great Adventure*.

iv. **William de Morgan** took to novel writing, much late in life. He produced nine novels. The first three—*Joseph Vance*, *Alice*—for-short, somehow good are the best. He was more original and excelled in both humour and controlled pathos.

General Prose in the early 20th century

Revolutionary changes came in journalism during the closing years of the 19th century. Newspapers assumed some of the functions of the magazines to provide a new medium to the periodical essay.

Robert Lynd and A.G. Gardiner did admirable work under the conditions of limited length imposed by the press. E.V. Lucas made a definite mark, combining qualities of a familiar essay and of a fine novel. Over *Bemerton's* is a characteristic example of this entertainment. Max Beerbohm was a prodigy of the nineties. His

small book of essays, *The Works of Max Beerbohm* was popular. He was not only the most brilliant caricaturist of his generation but also a parodist of genius.

Kenneth Graham's *The Golden Age*, *Dream Days* and *The Wind in the Willows* have become classics for both children and grown-ups. A.A. Milne added when we were *Very Young* to the list of books.

G.M. Doughty stands at the head of the travel writers of the period. *Arabia Deserta* is his popular work. W.H. Hudson produced nature books, written in a cool, clear style.

Lytton Strachey made a genuine advance in biography with his epoch-making books, *Eminent Victorians* and *Queen Victoria*. Strachey found transformed it into a fine art.

The Present Age(1930-1955)

20th Century - Poetry

Gerald Manley Hopkins

He is one of the the pioneers in modern poetry.He is a strange,Who became very famous 19 years after his death. He did not publish any of poems during his lifetime. In 1918 **Robert bridges** collector and published his poems. These poems are characterized by a new rhythm called **sprung rhythm**, Peculiar **use of language** and an intense **religious tone**.

He popularised two more poetic terms called the 'inscape'and 'instress'. Inscap means the **essence, the individual quality** that makes up a thing instress is the force or energy which sustain inscape.

the poetry of Hopkins is filled with the sense of the glory of god. He sees the presence of God in all things he sees. In a popular poem called **God's Grandeur** he writes "**The world is charged with the grandeur of God**". He is fine **sonneteer**. **He has** experimented with the sonnet form. He has written sonnets in **Sprung Rhythm**, also he reduced the line of numbers from **14 line to 10 ¼**. These new reduced sonnets are called **curtal sonnets**.

Hopkins final is a great poet living in the late Victorian period he wrote a type of poetry which came to be returned only during the present age **The Wreck of the Duchess Land, The Windhover, Pied Beauty Spring and Fall and Spring** are some of the best known poems of Hopkins.

T. S Eliot

He was born in the The United States of America and was educated there and in France before settling down in England he is one of the most influential writers of the 20th century English Literature. He has made a significant contribution to poetry, Drama and Criticism. With **The Waste Land** TS Eliot established reputation This made him the leading living poet of the English speaking world. The poet presents **disturbing picture of the post- war Europe**. It was written in free- verse, interspersed with a variety of literary allusions and quotations. **The journey of the Magi, Ash Wednesday, and The Four Quarters** are some of his very important poems.

TS Eliot contribution to the English drama is also significant he has divided poetic drama successfully **murder in the cathedral** as a play on the theme of the martyrdom of **Saint Thomas becket in the cathedral of Canterbury** but the theme of **Cocktail party** is contemporary life - the domestic life of a lawyer and his wife. **The Family Reunion, The Confidential clerk and The Elder Statesman** are his other plays.

His fundamental ideas in criticism are: the Oneness of the Western literary tradition and its influence on modern writer, the importance of poetic form and its ability to convey meaning . His selected essays **The Sacred wood, The Use of Poetry and Use of criticism** are some of his well known critical works. This he is a very famous figure and has contributed enormously to literature.

W. B. Yeats

William Butler yeats was born in **Ireland** and lived both and Ireland and England poems for characterized by love for **Irish myth and literature**. He had contributed a good deal to the revival of Irish poetry and Iris theatre and he might be rightly called The **National Poet of Ireland**.

Yeats's greatest contribution in the field of poetry. His best poems belong to the **last 20 years of poetic career the whole of poetry** is marked by a search for an ideal in life. In his poetry it has drawn images and symbols from many sources from magic ritualism Greek and Irish myth literature and history.

Some of the best poems are are **Adam's Curse, Easter 1916 , The Second Coming, Byzantium, Lapis Lazuli and The Circus Animal's Desertion**.

Yeats is considered one of the powerful symbolist in Literature a symbol is 18 or a word that stands for some other object or idea. For example **Rose** symbolizes **beauty** or the **Sea** is a **symbol** of **immortality**. The symbolist movement was started in 19th century France by Baudelaire, **Rimbaud Mallarme** and **Valery**. East struggled and worked for nearly 10 years to start dramatic theatre in Dublin the capital of Ireland. Finally he succeeded in his attempt in 1899. He established the Iris National theatre. His theatre influenced great Irish playwrights like **J M Synge** and **Sean O'Casey**. The establishment of the Iris theatre is the greatest service rendered by WB Yeats to the Irish literature.

Minor Poets of the 20th century

Most of the poets of the first half of the 20th century were concerned with the political troubles of the period. Their interest dwindled when the trouble ceased to exist. **W H Auden** and **C. Day Lewis** continued to maintain their reputation. **Louis MacNeice** and **Stephen Spender** were becoming prominent. In the war atmosphere poetry could not find sustenance. The war altered the mood of the common man. Only after the war there was some sign of poetry returning with the different style.

Dylan Thomas reached a larger audience "**Under Milk Wood**" published after his death is a noteworthy publication.

The Contribution of the Sitwell family is worth mentioning. **Edith Sitwell** is to be considered on the level of the greatest English woman poet. She experimented with the technical range of words. **Osbert Sitwell** was a poet, novelist and short-story writer. **Sacheverell Sitwell** wrote poetry but devoted himself mainly to the writings on art.

Walter DE la Mare wrote many delightful poems for children in "**Peacock Pie**" and other volumes. He has written more poems for mature readers. His poems have a strange atmosphere.

