

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 : IV

Topics Covered : Poets and Novel writers in the Age of Wordsworth.

Course Code : 16AACEN4

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PROSE IN THE AGE OF WORDSWORTH

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

- It is marked by the rise of the modern review and magazine.
- Magazines gave great encouragement to Essay writing.
- Magazines offered a fresh field for criticism.
- The Edinburgh Review and The Quarterly Review – plays a vital role during this period.
- Another important magazine was The London Magazine.
- The prose writers of the romantic period discarded the 18th century tradition.

Contributors to magazines in the Romantic Period

a) The Edinburgh Review

Francis Jeffrey contributed 200 articles to the Edinburgh Review. He neither opposed to the Romantic Movement, nor a supporter of the Augustan Movement.

Sydney Smith, was a clergyman. He is noted for his satire Peter, Plymley's Letters. He was not much entertained by the mordeners.

b) The Blackwood's Men

John Wilson, a Professor of Moral Philosophy. His best works is to be found in his Noctes Ambrosianae. They are in the form of dialogues. **Christopher North** is the Pen name of John Wilson.

Thomas De Quincey

He wrote for both Blackwood and London Magazine. He is the master of Romantic prose. His essay "**Confessions of English Opium Eater**" is a classic. He is remembered for his autobiographical writings.

John Gibson Lockhart

He is a connecting link between Edinburgh and London. He produced much miscellaneous work, including **four novels, a volume of spirited Spanish Ballads and Life of Burns**. His famous work was **Life of Scott**. **SCORPION** was the nickname of Lockhart.

c) The London Men

Charles Lamb contributed to London men. His delightful **Essays of Elia** is an immortal work. He was master of humour and pathos. His sympathies with the Elizabethan Literature are seen in his Tales from Shakespeare.

William Hazlitt

He is called as **The Critic's Critic**. He wrote mainly for magazines and published art and dramatic criticism. He has a strong passion for analyzing human nature. He is a psychologist. His essays like “**Going on a Journey**”, “**On the Pleasure of Painting**” are interesting.

He contributed to magazines - **Morning Chronicle, Edinburgh Review and The Examiner**. His best criticism is contained in “**Characters of Shakespeare's Plays**”, “**The English Poets**”, “**the English Comic Writers**”.

Other prose writers of the Romantic Age.

1) William Cobbett

He was a political reformer, journalist, pamphleteer and a maker of many books. His **Rural Rides** is his most important book. His **English Grammar** is unique among grammars.

2) Landor

He is known for his picturesque style. His major prose work is **Imaginary Conversations**. **The Citation of William Shakespeare, Pericles and Aspasia and The Pentameron** are other popular works of Landor.

3) Southey

He was a industrious prose writers. His masterpiece is the admirable **Life of Nelson**.

4) Coleridge

Biographia Literaria is his popular work, which contain fine passage on the theory of Romantic poetry.

The Age of Wordsworth

The Novel

Sir Walter Scott

He was born on **August 15, 1771**, at Edinburgh.

Sir Walter Scott is remembered chiefly as a novelist. He is said to have popularized a new form of the novel, **Historical novel**. It only presents the life and manners of the people of the particular period. Scott's *Ivanhoe* is an imaginary novel, which has the historical background of the 12th century.

His first novel *Waverley* is nothing but an amalgamation of the manners of the Scottish and historical romance.

Scott has a thorough knowledge of the past. Past came to him automatically. At the same time we cannot take the facts given by Scott as historical truths.

In his novels, Scott presents a picture of eight centuries. To give a few examples, his *Count Robert of Paris* is based on 11th century; *Talisman and Ivanhoe* on the 12th century; *Castle Dangerous* on the 14th century; *Quentin Durward* on the 15th century; *Kenilworth* on the 16th century; *The Fortunes of Nigel*, *The Legend of Montrose* and *Old Mortality* on the 17th century; *Rob Roy* and *The Heart of Midlothian* on the 18th century; and *St. Ronan's well* on the 19th century. Scott not only deals with the history of Scotland and England but also with that of France.

There are certain **defects in the Scott's novels**.

Scott has created a wide range of characters; but he **lacks insights** into his characters. His novels are all very well constructed. His creations **lack spiritual insight and grasp**. Scott is no good in presenting female characters. It is to be admitted that, in spite of all the defects, his novels never fail to please us.

Jane Austen as a Novelist.

Jane Austen presents the life of the English country society. Jane Austen lived a quiet life. She avoided popularity when alive.

Jane Austen has six famous novels to her credit. Her **masterpiece, *Pride and Prejudice*** is a perfect comedy of manners. Her **Emma** deals with the heroine's attempts to **find husbands for her friend**. ***Sense and Sensibility*** is **satiric** and ridicules the **sentimentalists**. ***Mansfield Park*** is **a study of the members of a house**, Mansfield Park. Northanger Abbey is modeled on Gothic novels. Her last novel, ***Persuasion*** is a moving **love story of Anne Elliot and Frederick Wentworth**.

Some very common occurrences in her novels are picnics, dances, amateur theatricals, elopements, match makings, etc. Her novels are simply **"tea-table novels"**.

Austen is a supreme realist. Her stories, characters and incidents are drawn from real life. In her novels she records accurately the manners, charms and tricks of speech of her characters. She likes sensible persons and hates folly.

Her plots are very well constructed. She may not be interesting to those who expect big actions, passionate lovers, and jarring characters. She is a class by herself.