Comprehensive Notes

for UGC-NET/JRF, HSA (PSC), HSST (PSC), Lectureship (PSC), SET, and MPhil & PhD Entrance Exams in English Language & Literature

BOOK 1

LITERARY HISTORY & LITERARY THEORY

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BOOK ONE

LITERARY HISTORY & LITERARY THEORY

CONTENTS

Pages

25. Chapter Twenty-five
26. Chapter Twenty-six

History

Introduction to the Period of Chaucer
Origins of English Drama
The Full Tide of the Renaissance
Early Tudor Poetry
Early Elizabethan Drama
Shakespeare
Post-Shakespearean Drama: Ben Jonson
Elizabethan Poetry After Spenser
Elizabethan Prose Writers
Seventeenth Century Poetry
Seventeenth Century Prose
Restoration Comedy
The Beginnings of Modern Prose
Poetry of the Eighteenth Century
Journalism and the Essay
Satire
The Rise of the Modern Novel
Later Novels of the 18th Century
Drama in the 18th Century
The New Poetry of the Transitional Period
Romantic Poets
Novelists of the Romantic Period
Victorian Poetry
Victorian Novelists
Twentieth Century Poetry
Modernist Fiction

Section Two: Literary Theory

1. New Criticism
2. Formalism
3. Structuralism
4. Post-Structuralism
5. Deconstruction
6. Postmodernism
7. Feminism
8. Postcolonialism

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Foreword

It is with a clearly-defined objective and meticulous research that Vallaths Total English Solutions is venturing into the production of this new set of notes for students of English Language and Literature. In spite of the overwhelming reception accorded to our first set by graduates and postgraduates from all over Kerala and other States, we thought it necessary to introduce a more condensed, economical set of notes so as to reach out even further to the large section of students all over the country who are desperately in need of comprehensive study material on English Language & Literature.

This new set of notes comprises elaborate sections on Literary History, Literary Theory, Literary Works, Language Studies, and most importantly, major topics in a nutshell, facilitating quick revision. Together, this new set of notes is immensely useful for preparation for any competitive examination in English Language and Literature, as several batches of our own students have certified. Our notes are the result of years of collective study and collaborated effort, and we lay great importance on a personal, individualized approach. Students can feel free to contact us for clarifications and feedback.

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SECTION ONE

BRITISH LITERARY HISTORY

A QUICK VIEW

CHAPTE ONE
INTRODUCTION TO THE PERIOD OF CHAUCER

The transitional period between the Middle Ages and Modern Era was studded with important landmarks. (1) Literature, esp. poetry, changed over from the oral to the written - literature was now a matter of books and readers. (2) With the advent of printing, anonymity was succeeded by authorship - till then a piece of writing had stood for itself; now it claimed attention as the work of a particular author. The age of invention, of originality, of individual self-expression had begun. (3) Though French and Latin were sill popular among the nobility and the clergy, English had established itself as the literary language. This encouraged translations, adaptations and imitations. (4) The age of chivalry and feudalism was in its decline. (5) Constitutional liberty has been asserted; the king was no longer the unquestioned authority.

When Chaucer was young, England was at the height of glory, (victories at war, patriotic national poetry). But the glory was soon to disappear. Between 1348 and 1376 Black Death

visited the country several times and half the population disappeared. Economic troubles followed; serfdom changed to wage system. There was social unrest and the royal house became increasingly unpopular. The Seven Years' War with France went disastrously, a new poll-tax was imposed in 1380 and the next year, the peasants rose in revolt which was ultimately suppressed.

Chaucer gave little heed to these disturbing events. He lived the inner life of a man of letters, detached from the storms of the world, studying and adapting to his own uses French and Italian poetry, and finally, in The Canterbury Tales, making his mature art the obedient instrument of his native genius. His contemporary Langland was very different from him in spirit - Langland's was the voice of the poor, the voice of revolution, and he was a chastiser of the vices of his age. Gower too denounced the follies of his contemporaries though not as sharply as Langland.

Another voice of spiritual protest in this age was that of John Wyclif, the leader of the Lollard Movement that prophesied the Reformation. Supported by his patron, John of Gaunt, Wycliff attacked the corrupt clergy in strong persuasive English prose that breathed a fervent moral and religious spirit. Untiringly he led a crusade against papal demands and for church reform. Wyclifism was finally suppressed and this in turn extinguished not only religious freedom but also all intellectual life at the University until the Renaissance.

The literary outburst in the 14th century produced one of the greatest of all English poets-Geoffrey Chaucer-and several lesser ones, the result of which was to fix the English language. In spite of their antiquity Chaucer's works are still read with the sense that their vocabulary and the style are Modern English.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER (1340-1400)

Chaucer may be called the founder of the true line of English poets. His greatness and national importance have never been in doubt from the first. His genius had been recognised in all ages including his own. Chaucer served for some time in the court and was employedon several diplomatic missions to Italy and France. His earliest work was perhaps the translation of *Roman de la Rase.* Some scholars divide Chaucer's career into the French period, the middle period (both French and Latin influences) and the Italian period, but this division is not very appropriate. An important early work is The *Book of the Duchess* written on the death of Blanche, the wife of Chaucer's patron John of Gaunt. Other works of Chaucer are *Legend of St. Cicilia, Parliament of Fowls, Troilus and Criseyde* (based on Boccaccio's Filostrato), *House of Fame* (unfinished), *Palamon and Arcite* (based on Boccaccio's Teseida and revised as the Knight's Tale), Legend *of Good* Women (9 stories of famous women: Cleopatra, Thisbe, Dido, Hypsipyle and Medea, Lucrece, Ariadne, Philomela, Phyllis, Hypermnestra) and a translation of Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy.* Another prose work (apart from this translation) is *A Treatise on the Astrolabe* written for "Little Lewis", probably the author's son. But the greatest of all his works is indeed *The Canterbury Tales*-17000 lines in prose and verse of various metres.

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The General Prologue to *The CanterburyTales* describes the meeting of 29 pilgrims in the Tabard Inn at Southwark (31 pilgrims, including the poet and Harry Bailey, the innkeeper). Detailed pen-pictures of 21 of them are given which include Knight, Squire, Miller, Reeve, Cook, Wife of Bath, Clerk of Oxford, Friar, Summoner, Pardoner, Prioress, Merchant, Monk, Parson, etc. The host proposes that the pilgrims should shorten the road by telling 4 stories each-2 on the way to Canterbury and 2 on the way back; he will award a free supper on their return to the teller of the best story. The work is incomplete - only 23 pilgrims tell stories and there are only 24 stories altogether. The narrative begins with the Knight's Tale and concludes with the Parson's Tale which is a long prose treatise.

Chaucer was primarily a storyteller. He also possessed the technique and the temper of a lyricist. He introduced personal touches into many of his poems, sometimes charming, sometimes "humorous; and very rarely philosophized on human affairs and the mysteries of existence. But though Chaucer was primarily a storyteller, he had little gift of plot - a gift very rare in his day. (Almost every work of his had a direct source and his poems, he left incomplete). However, being a court poet, Chaucer was bound to handle themes for which no model could be found. (Blanche's death, Richard II's marriage). He did produce a charming poem on every occasion but they were always short and made use of conventional forms. The device of dream, for instances, is used in the prologue to The Book of the Duchess, in *The Parliament of Fowls,* and again in the *Legend of Good Women* and in the *House of Fame.*

It cannot be denied that Chaucer overcame his shortcomings through hard work and became a master of his craft. He set to work as a translator, often using his materials in original combinations. From the outset he possessed two great gifts-music and descriptive power; coupled with these we find

him enriching his abridged material with philosophy and humour, making it more human and dramatic until he retold the story in his own way, which was often better than that of his authorities.

Chaucer recognised the power of abridgement and the value of swiftness in a narration. While in the Knight's Tale he shortens the descriptions of three temples of Mass, Venus and Diana, to make his poems appeal to the more thoughtful readers, he adds ethical and philosophical passages from Latin, French and Italian sources, especially the *Consolation of Philosophy* by Boethius.

In romance, Chaucer showed great dramatic power, especially in *Troilus and Criseyde* and *Palamon and Arcite.* In *Troilus* he translates half of Boccaccio's *Filostrato* and adds twice as much of his own. Thus having outlined the plot, he ornaments it with Dante, Petrarch and Boethius, and investing Criseyde with a pathos and Pandarus with a humour and worldly wisdom of which there is little trace in the original. *Palamon and Arcite* is a model of condensation but Chaucer adds his own touches to the theme and characterisation making it more powerful and dramatic.

By now Chaucer seems to be confident that if he followed a story he had read or heard he could realize the characters in it for himself and know the details of the action by which they would carry out the plot. He needed to keep no book in front of him while he wrote; all he needed was a story with a beginning, a middle and an end, which he could rehandle in his own way.

In *The Canterbury Tales* he gave scope to his gift for minute description in the Prologue. It is virtually a portrait gallery of 14th century England, an assembly of all classes of Englishmen from the noble Knight to a humble cook. The whole poem is a valuable historical document, unsurpassable as evidence of the feeling and culture of English men of the time.

Chaucer had a perennial interest in the lives of human beings ranging from noblemen to rogues. He seems to have been

very observant - he watched how people behaved, noted their physiognomic details and the way they wore their clothes. He was ready to call every rascal a good fellow if he was ready to sit for his portrait. He admired goodness with an open mind, but it has been said that he had too much admiration from his rascals than his noblemen.

Chaucer's world is distinguished by its happiness. There is pain and perplexity in it but no agony or rebellion. Fortune is all powerful but never too harsh. Of moral and spiritual tragedies Chaucer seems to have been ignorant, he knew only of the material ones that Fortune can bring about, and to the victims of these he was very sympathetic. However he had a deep sense of sorrow in human life. He may also be said to have excelled in comedy in pure mirth and laughter. Chaucer's characters never shared any part of his own personality or life. He was always present with fhe audience rather than the characters themselves. In short, his genius was essentially narrative.

CHAPTER TWO ORIGINS OF ENGLISH DRAMA

MIRACLE, MYSTERY AND MORALITY PLAYS

Like the great drama of the Greeks, the English drama owed its origin to religious ritual. It began in a simple attempt to render clearly the central doctrine of the Church. These plays were usually performed in the church by clergymen during Easter time. Gradually these included stories from the Old and New Testaments and the lives of saints; as they became more elaborate and dramatic, the plays moved from the interior of the church to the porch, to the churchyard, and later to meadows, streets and other public places. Plays, by then, had of course become secular, and the clergy began to view them with suspicion. But the revival of the Corpus Christ festival in 1311 provided a public holiday dedicated to dramatic representations of Biblical history. The growing importance of fairs, and the increase in wealth of the trading classes made miracle plays a regular feature of the 15th century, retaining their religious basis but developing dramatically at the same time.

The miracle play proper, dealing with the lives of the saints, has been traced back to early 12th century, when a play of St. Katherine was performed at Dunstable. A Norman clerk called Hilarius composed several miracles of which *St. Nicholas* and *Raising of Lazarus* are extant. The oldest English fragment, *Harrowing of Hell,* dates back to the 13th century.

The mystery plays dealing with the Scripture history were developed from the Easter and Christmas plays and were especially associated with the Corpus Christi festival. They were performed in a cycle of pageants, each representing a single episode. These plays were enacted by several guilds at especially

the towns of York, Wakefield, Chester, Norwich and Coventry. The stage was a crude contrivance of two stories - the lower representing hell and the upper signifying heaven.

The mystery plays had little literary merit. Though the dialogue was sometimes lively and witty, the verse was crude and limping. These plays had no freedom of plot and the least suspicion of heresy could be fatal.

Several complete cycles of mysteries have been preserved. The York cycle consists of 48 plays. The Towneley Mysteries, consisting of 30 plays, were performed at Wakefield. They treat their themes in a freer, less religious spirit, and hence, are more dramatic. They are less didactic and the human interest is heightened. The Chester group of 24 plays is more uneven and those of Coventry, 42 in number, have a serious, moralizing allegorical tone. Nothing is known of the authors of any of these plays.

In the group of 4 plays known as the Digby Mysteries (c. 1500), an unmistakable advance in the direction or regular drama is made, especially in *Mary Magdalene.* But this realistic line of growth was interrupted by the morality play. The morality play retained the crude versification-of the mystery, making use of alliteration as well as rhyme. It was, like the mystery, serious in intention and dealt with the basic problem of good and evil. They were written in the then fashionable allegorical manner - the characters were abstractions of virtues and vices. For the first time they employed a definite plot which was a great advance in dramatic development. The earliest mention of a morality is that of the *Play of the Paternoster* (not extant) and the oldest extant play is *The Castle of Perseverance.* Even more abstract are such plays like *Mind, Wit and Understanding, The Four Elements,* and *Wit and Science.* The best of the older moralities is the impressive Everyman, in which the powerful allegory is

reinforced by considerable knowledge of human nature and well-handled dialogue.

Under Henry VIII, a patron of the drama, the morality grew into the interlude, a short dramatic piece filling the intervals of long spectacular ones. The interlude lost its didactic purpose and employed humour freely, as in the interludes of John Heywood like the *Four PP* (Four Ps). The interludes were the harbingers of regular drama.

CHAPTER THREE THE FULL TIDE OF THE RENAISSANCE

The Wars of the Roses, with which the Middle Ages came to an end in England, destroyed the peace and security of English life and resulted in a dearth of literature in the 15th century. It was during the Tudor period that England rose with a renewed nationalistic spirit, and peace returned after a long period of strife. England was swept along the strong tide of Renaissance. The re-discovery of the classics had profoundly influenced the educational system and the "New Learning" or Humanism reached its hey-day at the time of Henry VIII, under its exponents like Erasmus, More, Colet and Fisher.

Humanism affected English literature chiefly in the domain of prose. Since the models it took up were from Latin it sometimes led to affectation as in the euphuistic prose of Lyly. However these Latin

models brought order and precision into the chaos of English prose writings, and played an important role in the development of modern prose.

Humanism was a great influence in the advancement of English drama as well. The classical revival of the continent gave rise to a neo-Latin drama mostly written for schools and universities, of which *The Christian Terence* was a notable example. The Latin university drama also influenced English drama, especially the works of the "university wits".

Renaissance humanism was the parent of another movement - Reformation - which left a deeper imprint upon England's national character, but which was later to run counter to the Renaissance spirit. The two movements at first went hand in hand under the patronage of Henry Vlll. -Reformation gave rise to the Protestant religion which later became Puritanism, the religion of the middle classes who were growing rapidly in wealth and power. The austerity of Puritanism, its intense preoccupation with the spiritual needs of the individual and the ideal of economy it set before its eyes were all oppositional to the delight in life and love of extravagance that was the hallmark of Renaissance spirit and literature. Puritan criticism was directed particularly against the players: and English drama, however much it may owe to Renaissance, remained firmly rooted in Christian faith.

In the field of poetry the continental models were Petrarch and, especially to Spenser, Ariosto. The Sonnet and the Pastoral were, in this period, adapted to refined passion or delicate flattery.

PROSE WRITERS OF THE RENAISSANCE (16th Century)

In Medieval England as well as in the 14th and 15th centuries there was a preponderance of poetry in English

literature. The few writers who wrote in prose chose Latin.and sometimes French as their medium.

It is often said that printing stimulated the writing of prose. When more and more books were printed, it resulted in an increase in the number of readers, mostly common men. This meant a demand for books in prose. The bulk of Caxton's publications were in prose, so were those of the several publishing houses established in the 15*-16* century in England. The publishers mainly employed translators for rendering the romances into English, thereby producing a large number of prose works which were, however, of little literary merit.

Lord Berners was different from these professional translators. He was a statesman and a soldier. His translation of Froissart's *Chronicles* is a splendid example of epic prose. He went further than Malory in deliberately cultivating a sensuous vocabulary and a simple, direct style. He developed his rhetorical tendencies further in his translation of Guevara's *Libro Aureo* (The Golden Book of Marcus Aurelius). He also translated several romances. Berners began in English the extravagant cult of antithesis, metaphor, and ornate phraseology, which was later employed by Lyly.

The protagonist of Classical Renaissance in England was the Dutch scholar Desiderius Erasmus who came to England and joined a group of four scholars - Linacre, Colet, Grocyn and More. All of them were well- grounded in Greek erudition and theology, and hoped for a reformation of the Church. -Erasmus brought out an ' edition of the Greek Testament with a Latin translation. His genial nature, sharp observation, and humour are revealed in his *The Praise of Folly.*

John Colet was a principal Christian humanist, a scholar, theologian and educationist and the founder of St.Paul's School. His careful provisions for discipline and teaching are a permanent legacy to posterity.

Among the humanists, it was Thomas More who came closest to Erasmus in charm of disposition and humour. His diplomatic work in negotiating a commercial treaty with the Netherlands made More a part of English history. When More, like Bishop Fisher, refused to support Henry Vlll in his divorce and re-marriage, he was executed. This act of tyranny was condemned throughout Europe. More's *Utopia* was written in Latin and was first translated into English by Ralph Robinson.

Sir Thomas Elyot, author of *The Book of the Governor* was another major writer of this period. This book deals with the various branches of the education of a gentleman intended to take his due share in the government. Its discussions on the relative merits of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy in which the author favours the first, is an example of the freedom from pedantry,and the worldly wisdom of the author.

Another important writer on education was Roger Ascham who is remembered perhaps for his puritanical denunciation of Malory's *Morte d' Arthur.* But Puritanism does ho,t seem to agree with his interest in cock-fighting and sports as well as his elaborate work on archery-Toxophilus. His other major work was *The Schoolmaster.* Ascham urged that English matters should be written in the English language for Englishmen.

The two chief literary products of the Reformation were the translation of the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer, both of which were composite works. Parts of the Bible were translated by Wycliff and the Tudor translators probably were influenced by the simple English of the Wycliffite versions. The Authorized Version of 1611 was prepared by many hands at the command of James I of Scotland. In the evolution of the Prayer Book, Cranmer, who was employed by Henry Vlll, had the leading part. Apart from Cranmer, the literary merits of the English Bible in its present form are due to two other men as well-Tyndale and Coverdale.

Tyndale imbibed the Renaissance spirit and was enthusiastic about the reformed doctrines then being preached in Germany. Tyndale had difficulty getting his translation of the Bible printed in England and

Europe. Finally when he did succeed in printing it, the book was condemned by the English bishops and copies of it seized and destroyed. Later he won the approval of Henry Vlll but lost it by his denunciation of the divorce and was executed. Tyndale's prose style was rhythmic and forcible but rarely have a consistent beauty of expression.

Thomas Cranmer was a favourite of Henry Vlll by his convenient support of the King's divorce. He wrote well in Latin and English, and his own prayers, exhortations and homilies stand apart from those prepared by others under his authority.

Miles Coverdale published a translation of the Bible principally based on the Zurich Bible and Tyndale's version. One of its editions, known as Cranmer's Bible (for it contained a preface by Cranmer), was one of the main sources of the Authorised Version.

In the period after Berners, though English prose underwent much development, there did not evolve a really distinctive form of prose until the beginning of the Elizabethan era. Euphuism was the prose style of a generation though it owes its name to Lyly's book. Two years before the publication of *Euphues,* George Pettie in his *Petite Palace of Pettie his Pleasure,* displayed a euphuistic style. However *Euphues* was the most extravagant illustration of this prose style.

John Lyly's *Euphues or The Anatomy of Wit* with its sequel *Euphues and his England* was a brilliant experiment of a new prose. Its serious didactic tone, its philosophic attitude to contemporary life, its grave studies of character and personal relations and of the subtleties of emotion offer a sharp contrast

with the old romances and herald the novel of manners. However, *Euphues* is not a novel but a series of meditative debates with a thread of love-story serving to illustrate the author's criticism of society. The characters are vague idealisms in the manner of a morality.

Lylian euphuism aimed at a richness, a variety of ornament and an artificiality of structure. The structure was based on antithesis and employed balanced clauses and alliteration. The diction was enriched by figures of speech.

Sir Philip Sidney was an embodiment of the idealism, valour, keen intelligence and practical accomplishment of his age, and was a favourite of Queen Elizabeth. He had been in love with Penelope Devereaux, the 'Stella' of his sonnets. None of Sidney's works were printed in his life time.

First to be published were his love sonnets under the title 'Astrophel and Stella'. (His poetry which belongs in spirit to a later tradition than the prose, shall be dealt with later). His major prose works are *The Apologiefor Poetrie* (written in defence of poetry and as a reply to Stephen Gosson's *The School of Abuse)* and the romance-pastoral *Arcadia.*

The Apotogie for Poetrie has much of the ardour and imagination of a youthful poet as well as many of its shortcomings. Though he was misled by his classical training into denouncing the mixture of tragedy and comedy, and upholding the strictest observance of the unities, he gives us an extra-ordinary insight into the creative force and exuberance characteristic of Elizabethan poetry. In this critical treatise he expounds the view that all literature of an imaginative, idealistic nature- is poetry.

Sidney followed the Lylian theory of artistic prose to a certain, extent, though he condemned it in *Apologie.* Sidney's style is often as rich as that of *Euphues* though much more conservative and classical. *Euphues* was in its analytical

tendencies and its criticism of life an anticipation of the modern novel, Sidney's Arcadia belongs in essence to the stock of chivalric romance blended with the pastoral. But both works have an original plot. In *Euphues* the plot is a framework for the author's theorizing about life but in Arcadia the story is everything. Sidney wrote it for his sister, the countess of Pembroke. The scene is set in a remote Utopian land and breathe the ideals of chivalrous virtue, heroic energy, passionate love, and express his longing for a simpler and purer life in contrast to the pomps and frivolities of Elizabethan court.

The style of *Euphues* and *Arcadia* was imitated by other prose writers of the Elizabethan era. This will be dealt with in a later unit.

CHAPTER FOUR

EARLY TUDOR POETRY

The reign of Henry Vlll was rocked by momentous events in the political, religious and domestic spheres. Partly owing to the national preoccupation with the national affairs, partly due to the reluctance of noble men to come forward as professed authors, most courtly verse written during Henry Vlll's time was published only after his death.

In 1557 Richard Tottel published *Songs and Sonnets,* written by the right honourable Lord Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey and others. Surrey, who was then no more, was singled out for mention because of his exalted rank. The other important contributors of the Tottel's Miscellany

were Sir Thomas Wyatt, Nicholas Grimald, and Lord Thomas Vaux.

Sir Thomas Wyatt, English nobleman and diplomat, was an important literary figure of 16th century England. He is believed to have come under the spell of Anne Boleyn for a time, for which he won the

displeasure of the king later, though temporarily. Though, like Surrey, Wyatt had been considerably influenced by foreign masters, he was an enthusiastic reader of Chaucer and borrowed many stylistic and formal features from him.

As was fashionable in Henry Vlll's Court, Wyatt wrote lyrics that could be set to music. One such song beginning "A Robyn / Joly Robyn" was immortalized by the fool in *Twelfth Night.* Some of Wyatt's lyrics show French influence, especially his rondeaux, but it cannot be clearly distinguished from his Italian influence. It was as a student of Petrarch, Serafino, Alamanni and Aretino that Wyatt opened a new era in English poetry and introduced the sonnet, the epigram and the terza rima to his fellow poets.

Thoughout of a total 31, 20 of his sonnets have been traced to Italian originals (mainly Petrarch), Wyatt was no slavish follower of his master. In the sestet he deviates from the Petrarchan rhyme scheme and rhymes cdd cee. Thus he introduces a final couplet to which the Elizabethan sonnet has clung in all its variations. Wyatt's sonnets exhibited a robust and defiant spirit and adapted Petrarchan lines to his own English circumstances.

Wyatt showed greater mastery over a simpler verse form, Ottawa rima, in which most of his epigrams are written, in which he borrows chiefly from Serafino.

Wyatt also wrote 3 satires, one of which he dedicated to Sir Francis Brian and the other two to John Poynz. These are written in terza rima, the metre used by Alamanni in his Satires.

The moral fervour of the Satires turns to the pleading of a penitent heart in the Penitential Psalms, of which Aretino's Psalms are the source.

In his verse Wyatt is present throughout as a man of affairs and a moralist. His interests were not insular but European and he brought English poetry into the great tradition of Greece and Rome, of Italy, France and Spain.

Henry Howard, the Earl of Surrey mourned Wyatt's death in a fine elegy. Like Wyatt he seems to have had a mistress- "Geraldine". In career and fortune both poets were akin to each other.

As a lyricist Surrey surpasses Wyatt in his sensitivity to natural beauty and his instinct for melodious rhythm. Though his direct borrowings from Italian are fewer than Wyatt's, he was more deeply affected by the tearful sentimentality of the Petrarchan school. But in technique Surrey broke away from the Italian models. He introduced the Elizabethan model with 3 quatrains and a couplet, thus forsaking the structural balance and intricate rhyme-scheme of the original. Though Surrey's sonnets had a stateliness of their own, it was only in Shakespeare's hands that the English sonnet achieved full grace and charm.

Another of Surrey's favourite metres was an Alexandrine (12 syllabled line) followed by a^ "fourteener", called a 'Poulter's measure'. This was quite popular in Surrey's time but died out in later ages. In his translation of Aeneid, Surrey abandoned rhyme altogether and stumbled inadvertently upon a revolutionary metre - the blank verse. This translation was first published by John Day. Though in his translation Surrey borrowed freely from Gawain Douglas's earlier rhymed version, his translation had an individual stamp and a remarkable quality. Surrey's innate sense of rhythm and -sensibility to suffering equipped him to interpret Virgil.

It is interesting to note that in Tottel's Miscellany itself there are 2 short blank-verse translations by another hand - Nicholas Grimald. But Grimald's blank verse lacks the sweetness of Surrey's and the constant alliteration is monotonous, but there is skilful use of run on lines.

A Mirror for Magistrates is one of the important books of the early Tudor period. It was a work planned by George Ferrers

and William Baldwin. In it various men and women, most of them drawn from English history, recount their down fall in verse. It was begun as a continuation of Lydgate's The *Falls of Princes.* Apart from Ferrers and Baldwin, Thomas Churchyard and Thomas Sackville were also associated with the writing of this work. Sackville wrote in rhyme-royal the Induction to this work and contributed 2 poems including 'The Complaint of Buckingham'. As a poet Sackville had vision, instinct and a true mastery over his craft; and in essence, he belonged to the Renaissance. In the field of drama he collaborated with Norton in writing *Gorboduc.* Thereafter he retired from literary activity and Spenser lamented the silence of his learned Muse". ... ^

Edmund Spenser was the greatest literary influence of this period. His major works are *The Shepheardes Calender, The Faerie Queene, Dapnaida, an Elegy, Astrophel, a Pastoral Elegy, Amoretti, Epithalamion, Four Hymns* and *Prothalamion.*

In *The Shepheardes Calender,* the author, veiling himself under the modest title of 'Immerito,' steps aside for 'E.K.' (believed to be Edward Kirke) who introduces the poem to Gabriel Harvey. The work is dedicated to Sidney and it consists of 12 eclogues, one for every month of the year. They take the form of dialogues among shepherds, except the first and last, which are complaints by Colin Clout, who is Spenser himself. The eclogues are modelled on those by Theocritus, Virgil, Mantuan and Marot.

In a shorter poem, *Mother Hubbard's Tale,* Spenser's discipleship to Chaucer is evident. Here he turns a beast-fable to political and social satire. The bare, forthright diction and the strong, rapid swing of the decasyllabic couplet have the Chaucerian stamp.

Spenser's *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* is an allegorical pastoral dedicated to Walter Ralegh. The poem ends with a tribute to Colin's mistress Rosalind.

The greatest work of Spenser is The *Faerie Queene,* the 1st 3 books of which were published in 1590 and the next 3 in 1596. The general scheme of the work is elaborated on in the author's introductory letter to Walter Ralegh. By *The Faerie Ojjeene* the poet signifies glory in the abstract and Elizabeth I in particular, who also figures under the names Britomart, Belphoebe, Mercilla and Gloriana. Twelve of her knights - examples of twelve virtues - each undertake an adventure. Prince Arthur, symbolising 'magnificence* has a vision of the Faerie Queene, and determined to seek her out, is brought into the adventures of the Knights. The book however does not present Arthur but starts at once with the adventures of the knights. They are:

I.

The adventures of the Redcrosse Knight of Holiness (The Anglican Church);

The adventures of Sir Guyon, the Knight of temperance;

The legend of chastity, exemplified by Britomart and Beplhoebe;

IV. V. VI.

The legend of Trlamond and Campbell exemplifying Friendship;

The adventures of Artegall, the Knight of Justice;

The adventures of Sir Calidore, exemplifying Courtesy. There is also a fragment on Mutabilitie, which was to have formed the 7* book. The book is modelled to some extent on Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso.* The work is written in the Spenserian stanza.

The Faerie Ojjeene is an allegory on multiple levels. It is the moral allegory of Glory, the political one of Queen Elizabeth and the religious allegory of the Anglican Church. There is also a historical level and at times Arthur is to be identified with Leicester, Artegall with Lord Grey of Wilton and Duessa with Mary, Queen of Scots. In fact Spenser's genius and imagination were too fertile to move at ease within the limits of allegory. He

had a vast framework to fill, and he crowded into it the most diverse materials.

But, even though there is no structural unity, there is an inner spiritual one. It is the epic of the militant spiritual life, ever battling with evil in its many forms, unwearied in the quest for Honour. However, in spite of his strict moral sense, Spenser had a keen sensibility for Beauty which is very much part of his work. Perfectly matching the rich complexity of *The Faerie Ojjeene* is the nine - lined Spenserian stanza ending with the Alexandrine and rhyming ababbcbcc.

The *Faerie Ojjeene* does indeed foretell a golden age of English literature, being a poetic masterpiece worthy to be set beside the plays of Shakespeare, the prose of the Authorized Version and the prophetic vision of the Baconian philosophy.

CHAPTER FIVE EARLY ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

INTRODUCTION: England at the accession of Elizabeth (1558)

The first half of the 16* century was beset with political confusion, economic uncertainties and religious troubles. Elizabeth ascended the English throne in 1558 when the conditions were most unfavourable. With diplomacy, remarkable political insight and the cunning of a born statesman, Elizabeth changed the face of the country. Under her, Britain rose as an international power - proud and successful - a naval power to be reckoned with, that reached the heights of its glory by its defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. Britain was again a nation tuned

for great literature to give immortal expression to the new national self- consciousness.

This was a time when naval commerce and trade flourished, wealth accumulated adding to the comfort of all classes. They had leisure, and as a consequence, a wider public was created for the abundant outpouring of literary works at this time. The drama, in spite of Puritan opposition, thrived and grew more respectable. *:*

Material prosperity in the Elizabethan age was coupled with a cultural progress that was the effect of Renaissance. Education spread, so did the knowledge in Latin and Greek. The Latin of the Renaissance was very different from the Latin of the Middles Ages. Virgil, Cicero, and particularly Ovid were studied in their best works. Greek was not so familiar, but its influence was immense. "From the Greeks the Elizabethans acquired a humane nature which overwhelmed the pedantries of Latin culture.

The Elizabethan era witnessed several major translations- Golding's Ovid *(Metamorphosis),* North's Plutarch (Lives), and Chapman's Homer placed the classical masterpieces in the hands of those who had "small Latin and less Greek". During this period, the influence of Italy is seen in scholarship, in poetry, romance and pastoral. The Elizabethans turned to Italy for pioneers in literary criticism, to Petrarch for the sonnet, to Ariosto for the romantic epic, to Sannozaro for an Arcadia, to Bandello and Cinthio for many 'novels' and dramatic plots. They learnt cultural poetry from France and Montaigne led the way for Bacon. Elizabethan England also felt the impulse towards scientific learning as is reflected in some works.

The many-sided intellectual innovation was reflected in Elizabethan literature. There were books like *Euphues* which were honeycombed with classical allusions. Along with these there were the bold philosophizing of Marlowe, as well as frank

animalism of later dramatists to whom liberty meant licence. This

later licensiousness was checked by the growing puritan power which killed drama for a time. The mo: typically Elizabethan writers - Spenser, Sidney and Lyly - had in them the moral seriousness of a Puritan. Bu in the hands of later dramatists like Fletcher, Middleton, Webster and Ford, drama declined to Melodrama indecency and unnatural plots.

James I, who succeeded Elizabeth, was pedantic and narrow-minded in his literary interests. Grea poetry ceased to come forth and drama reflected the corrupt morals of an uncritical court. Instead of unit there was now division in the nation. Puritan fervour now drifted into a Catholic point of view. Thu Elizabethan literature slowly faded into the shadow of a great national conflict.

EARLY ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

At the time of Henry Vlll the morality play still held the field of drama, and it lingered on till the tim< of Shakespeare. But the Renaissance spirit at the Tudor Court demanded plays that would amuse rather thar instruct; and the result was the interlude. Interludes were of a comical nature, generally dealing with a single incident. They did not have much literary merit but they were intimately associated with the rise of th< professional actor in England. The printing-press had deprived the minstrel of his occupation. The minstrels 01 players now turned to the theatre and they were embraced by the actors' companies that now rose in Englanc under the patronage of noblemen. It was during the time of Elizabeth's reign - around 1580 - that permanent play houses were established, drama got its division into acts and scenes, and there came about a distinctior between tragedy and comedy.

By the middle of the 15th century, Terence, Plautus (both influenced Elizabethan comedy) and Seneca (influenced Elizabethan tragedy) began to be enacted in schools and

universities, giving rise to an outburst ol scholastic drama. There was a large body of Latin drama written at the universities during the Tudor period. These exerted a powerful influence upon the development of vernacular drama as well. An English comedy, probably the first, was produced about 1550 at Eton or Winchester in imitation of Plautus. This was called *Ralph Roister Doister by* Nicholas Udall. At about the same time another comedy was produced at Christ's College - *Gammer Gurton's Needle* by one W.S (probably William Stevenson or John Still). The earliest extant English tragedy was likewise the work of scholars-Norton and Sackville. The play was modelled on Seneca and was called *Gorboduc* (alternate title "Ferrex and Porrex"). *Gorboduc,* which followed the classical model, was also the first play written to be written in blank verse, the native tongue of Elizabethan theatre.

UNIVERSITY WITS

About twenty years after *Gorboduc,* in about 1580, the first of the University Wits appeared on the English stage. The Wits were a group of seven young writers, bred in the traditions of the classical drama and educated at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

(1)John Lyly, the first of the seven to enter the field, stands apart from the others in that he wrote entirely for the court rather than for the popular stage. Lyly's eight plays, to which Shakespeare owed a considerable debt, were court allegories. Their themes were derived from classical mythology, and nearly all were in prose, steeped in the euphuistic style. Two of his best plays are *Endymion* and *Campaspe.*

(2)George Peele, another of this group, is remembered chiefly for his *Arraignment of Paris, David and Bethsabe, The Old Wives' Tale* and *The Battle of Alcazar.* Peele's work is dominated by courtly and patriotic themes.

(3)Thomas Kyd, in The *Spanish Tragedy,* established "the tragedy of blood", to which Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* belongs. *Hamlet* itself is said to be based upon a horror-play of the same genre-ur-Hamter- believed to be written by Kyd.

(4)Thomas Lodge wrote classical plays like *The Wounds of Civil War,* and *A Looking Glass for London and England* in collaboration with Greene. [Lodge wrote a Defence of Poetry in response to Gosson's *School of Abuse]*

(5)Robert Greene was a man of greater genius but he squandered it in drink and much second-rate writing. Gabriel Harvey, in *Four Letters,* attacked Greene's waywardness and Nashe defended him in *Strange News.* The best-known of his plays are *Orlando Furioso, Friar Bacon and Friar Bongay* and *James the Fourth.* Most of his plays are dramatized pastoral romances, like *As You Like It,* and *Vie,Winter's Tale.* Greene is also remembered today for his attack on Shakespeare as an "upstart Crow beautified with our feathers" in the *Groats-Worth of Wit.* His *Pandosto* was the source of *The Winter's Tale.*

(6)One of Greene's collaborators was **Thomas Nash** whose extant dramatic work is slight. [He is remembered for his prose work The *Unfortunate Traveller or The Life of Jack Wilton]*

The greatest of all University Wits was Christopher Marlowe. The youngest of the group and born in the same year as Shakespeare, Marlowe, before his untimely death at the age of 29, had founded English romantic tragedy and converted the stiff, mechanical blank verse of *Gorboduc* into that vital verse form which Shakespeare would later use in his plays. His plays show only moderate power of characterization but they carry the reader away by the sheer force and beauty of language and their imaginative power. In his four great plays the protagonists are driven by vaulting ambition, inordinate pride, a lust for power and inhumane cruelty. The tragedy invariably takes the same course-triumph followed by a mighty fall. Each protagonist is

Marlovian in his masculine prowess which often conceals a sensuous, sensitive heart. *Tamburlaine the Great* is his earliest and crudest creation where a shepherd-robber rises to imperial power through ruthlessly cruel actions and once appears on stage driving a team of kings before his chariot. His ferocity is softened only by his love for his captive Zenocrate. In *The Jew of Malta,* Barabas, a Jew, is harassed by the governor of Malta for not paying the tribute; and Barabas, in revenge rises to be the governor by treachery and the power of gold. But he is punished and killed by the Turkish commander against whom he plots. The Prologue to the play is spoken by 'Machevil' and Barabas is one of the prototypes for unscrupulous Machiavellian villains in later Elizabethan and Jacobean drama. His praise of gold and precious stones as "Infinite riches in a little room" is often quoted. *Doctor Faustus* is perhaps the first dramatization of the medieval legend of a man who sold his soul to the Devil and who became identified with a Dr. Faustus, necromancer of the 16th century. Marlowe's Faustus, unlike the legendary figure who was merely a magician, is an embodiment of a spiritual thirst for infinite power, an ambition to rule over the universe. Again, unlike the legend, at the end of the play, as the hour for the surrender of his soul draws near, Faustus is depicted as reeling in intense mental anguish. Marlowe's best work, from the technical point of view, is *Edward II,* but it cannot compare in psychological interest or poetic grandeur with *Doctor Faustus.* Like his great hero Faustus, Marlowe also tasted the forbidden fruit and came to a miserable and sordid end, not indeed torn by devils, but stabbed in a tavern over a slight dispute.

THE ELIZABETHAN STAGE

In the early stages of their existence, the actors' companies performed their plays in the open yards of some of the inns of the City Council, from where they were expelled in due course.

The first theatre was built by James Burbage in 1576. It was circular and open to the sky, the spectators stood in the pit, as they had done in the innyards. The movable stage was rectangular and trie audience could stand on three sides of it. A retiring house was curtained off behind the stage. After Burbage's death, it was pulled down and its timber used in the construction of The Globe (one of the 2 theatres Shakespeare was intimately associated with, the other being the Blackfriars).

Theatres that came after Burbage's were also in the form of an amphitheatre where spectators stood in the pit. There were 2 or 3 galleries where seats were provided. There were also boxes for more privileged spectators. Aristocrats were seated on the stage itself. There they would carry on active and very audible criticism of the performance before the eyes of the whole house. The stage was rectangular, open on 3 sides to the public. There was no curtain and the close of an act or scene was indicated by the exit of all the performers. In the case of the dead, provision was always made for their removal. There was an upper stage or balcony and a rear stage that could be curtained off. Scenery, in the modern sense, did not exist and places and scenes were indicated either by suitable properties or possibly by a placard and more commonly by the words of actors. Costume, however, was elaborate and expensive. Since there was no artificial lighting plays could be performed only during the daytime.

The Elizabethan audience was fun loving, yet enjoyed philosophizing on stage. They were very critical of drama and if they did not enjoy a play, it was immediately hissed off the stage. They wanted amusement and melodrama and plays of contemporary, social and historical interest. Hence Elizabethan drama was at times crude, farcical and indecent but on the whole full-blooded and imaginative with a remarkable human quality.

CHAPTER SIX SHAKESPEARE

SHAKESPEARE'S WORLD

Most of Shakespeare's career unfolded during the monarchy of Elizabeth I, the Queen from whom the historical period of the Bard's life takes its name as the Elizabethan Age. Elizabeth came to the throne under turbulent circumstances in 1558 (before Shakespeare was born),and ruled until 1603. Under her reign, not only did England prosper as a rising commercial power at the expense of Catholic Spain, Shakespeare's homeland undertook an enormous expansion into the New World and laid the foundations of what would become the British Empire. This ascendance came in the wake of the Renaissance and the Reformation, the former regaining Greek and Roman classics and stimulating an outburst of creative endeavour throughout Europe, the latter transforming England into a Protestant/Anglican state, and generating continuing religious strife, especially during the civil wars of Elizabeth's Catholic sister, Queen Margaret or "Bloody Mary."

The Elizabethan Age, then, was an Age of Discovery, of the pursuit of scientific knowledge, and the exploration of human nature itself. The basic assumptions underpinning feudalism/Scholasticism were openly challenged with the support of Elizabeth and, equally so, by her successor on the throne, James I. There was in all this an optimism about humanity and its future and an even greater optimism about the destiny of

England in the world at large. Nevertheless, the Elizabethans also recognized that the course of history is problematic, that Fortune can undo even the greatest and most promising, as Shakespeare reveals in such plays as *Antony* ft *Cleopatra.* More specifically, Shakespeare and his audiences were keenly aware of the prior century's prolonged bloodshed during the War of the Roses between the houses of Lancaster and York. Many Elizabethans, particularly the prosperous, feared the prospect of civil insurrection and the destruction of the commonwealth, whether as a result of an uprising from below or of usurpation at the top. Thus, whether or not we consider Shakespeare to have been a political conservative, his histories, tragedies and even his romances and comedies are slanted toward the restoration or maintenance of civil harmony and the status quo of legitimate rule.

SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE

His father, John Shakespeare, was successful in the leather business during Shakespeare's early childhood but later met with financial difficulties. During his prosperous years his father was also involved in municipal affairs, holding the offices of alderman and bailiff during the 1560s. While little is known of Shakespeare's boyhood, he probably attended the grammar school in Stratford, where he would have been educated in the classics, particularly Latin grammar and literature. Whatever the veracity of Ben Jonson's famous comment that Shakespeare had "small Latine, and less Greeke," much of his work clearly depends on a knowledge of Roman comedy, ancient history, and classical mythology.

In 1582 Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, eight years his senior and pregnant at the time of the marriage. They had three children: Susanna, born in 1583, and twins, Hamnet and Judith, born in 1585. Nothing is known of the period between the birth

of the twins and Shakespeare's emergence as a playwright in London (c.1592). However, various suggestions have been made regarding this time, including those that he fled Stratford to avoid prosecution for stealing deer, that he joined a group of travelling players, and that he was a country schoolteacher. The last suggestion is given some credence by the academic style of his early plays; The Comedy of Errors, for example, is an adaptation of two plays by Plautus.

In 1594 Shakespeare became an actor and playwright for the Lord Chamberlain's Men, the company that later became the King's Men under James I. Until the end of his London career Shakespeare remained with the company; it is thought that as an actor he played old men's roles, such as the ghost in Hamlet and Old Adam in As *You Like It.* In 15% he obtained a coat of arms, and by 1597 he was prosperous enough to buy New Place in Stratford, which later was the home of his retirement years. In 1599 he became a partner in the ownership of the Globe theatre, and in 1608 he was part owner of the Blackfriars theatre. Shakespeare retired and returned to Stratford c.1613. He undoubtedly enjoyed a comfortable living throughout his career and in retirement, although he was never a wealthy man.

I. **COMEDIES**

'Comedy' refers to drama that provokes laughter at human behaviour, usually involving romantic love and with a happy ending. In Shakespeare's day, the conventional comedy enacted the struggle of young lovers to surmount some difficulty, usually presented by their elders, and the play ended happily in marriage or the prospect of marriage. Sometimes the struggle was to bring separated lovers or family members together, and their reunion was the happy culmination. Shakespeare generally observed these conventions, though his inventiveness within them yielded many variations.

Eighteen plays are generally included among Shakespeare's comedies. They are divided into - early comedies *(The Comedy of Errors, Two Gentlemen of Verona, Tamingof the Shrew),* middle comedies (Love's *Labour's Lost, A Midsummer Nights' Dream, The Merchant of Venice, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Much Ado About Nothing, As You Like It, Twelfth Night)* tragi-comedies or problem plays *(Troilus and Cressida, Measure for Measure, All's well That Ends Well),* romances *(Pericles, Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale, The Tempest, The Two Noble Kinsmen)*

All of Shakespeare's comedies are driven by love. Love, in Shakespearean comedy, is stronger than the inertia of custom, the power of evil, or the fortunes of chance .and time. In all these plays except one (Troilus) the obstacles presented to love are triumphantly overcome, as conflicts are resolved and errors forgiven in a general aura of reconciliation and marital bliss at the play's close. Such intransigent characters as Shylock *(Merchant of Venice),* Malvolio *(Twelfth Night)* and Don John *(Much Ado About Nothing),* who choose not to act out of love, cannot be accommodated here, and are carefully isolated from the action before the climax.

In their resolutions Shakespeare's comedies resemble the medieval morality play, which centres on a sinful human being who receives God's mercy. In Shakespeare's secular comedies a human authority figure (for instance, Don Pedro in *Much Ado* or Duke Senior in As *You Like It)* is symbolically divine, the opponents of love are the representatives of sin, and all the characters partake of the love and forgiveness at the play's closing. Moreover, the context of marriage - at least alluded to at the close of all comedies except *Troilus and Cressida* - is the cap-stone of the comedic situation, for these plays not only delight and entertain, they affirm, guaranteeing the future. Marriage, with its promise of offspring, reinvigorates society and

transcends the purely personal element in sexual attraction and romantic love. Tragedy's focus

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on the individual makes death the central fact of life, but comedy, with its insistence on the on going *process* of love and sex and birth, confirms our awareness that life transcends the individual.

II. TRAGEDIES

A tragedy is a drama dealing with a noble protagonist placed in a highly stressful situation that leads to a disastrous, usually fatal conclusion. The 10 plays generally included among Shakespeare's tragedies are *Titus Andronicus, Romeo and Juliet, Julius Caesar, Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, King Lear, Antony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus* and *Timon of Athens.* A central group of 4 plays: *Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth* and *King Lear* offer Shakespeare's fullest development of tragedy, and they are sometimes collectively labelled the great tragedies. These plays focus on a powerful central character whose most outstanding personal quality-tragic flaw, as it is called-is the source of his catastrophe. He is the victim of his own strength, which will not allow accommodation with his situation, and we are appalled at this paradox and at the inexorability of his fate. These works, sometimes with the addition of Antony and Cleopatra, are often thought to constitute Shakespeare's greatest achievement as a playwright.

Shakespeare's tragedies developed out of earlier 16th century tragedies, which had antecedents in medieval poetry - verse accounts of disaster, suffering and death usually of mighty rulers. These medieval poems, however, did not lend themselves to the stage because they simply made a single point - that disaster comes even to the great, in the same fashion every time. Renaissance authors, imbued with a sense of the value of human experience, began to alter the pattern. A wider range of subjects was assembled and moral lessons incorporated into them.

A good instance, and an important influence to Shakespeare, was *A Mirror for Magistrates,* in which the settings range from classical and biblical worlds to recent history. The typical subject of the biographies of this compilation is a villainous tyrant whose fall is amply deserved. Retribution becomes the theme rather than simple inevitability. The ancient plays of Seneca were similar in subject and tone and these works were exploited by 16th century playwrights. The immediate result was the revenge play, pioneered by Christopher Marlowe and Thomas Kyd.

However, the emphasis on evil figures was gradually eroded by an awareness of the dramatic value of virtue. The medieval heritage of the Morality Play was an important influence on this development. Sometimes the good were simply victims as in *Titus Andronicus;* sometimes virtuous deeds resulted in death or disaster as in *The Rape of Lucrece,* and sometimes the two motifs combined, in virtuous victims whose deaths are redemptive, spiritually cleansing the world of the play as in *Romeo and Juliet.*

Shakespeare's first tragedy, *Titus Andronicus,* is a simple melodrama, frankly imitative of Seneca. With *Romeo and Juliet,* the young playwright advances considerably, developing human and credible protagonists. An essential tragic theme is established in *Romeo:* the superiority of the human spirit to its mortal destiny. It is in Julius Caesar that Shakespeare first achieves the distinctive element of the major tragedies, a protagonist. In *Julius Caesar,* the protagonist Brutus, who is undone^ precisely by his own virtues, as he pursues a flawed political ideal. A paradoxical sense of the interconnectedness of good and evil permeates the play, as the hero's idealism leads to disaster for both him and his world.

Only with *Hamlet* does the hero's personal sense of that paradox become the play's central concern. In *Hamlet* and its three great successors, Shakespeare composes four variations on

the overarching theme that humanity's weaknesses must be recognised as our inevitable human lot, for only by accepting our destiny can we transcend our morality. Hamlet, unable to alter the evil around him because of his fixation on the uncertainties of moral judgement, himself falls- into evil In killing Polonius and rejecting Ophelia but finally recovers his humanity by recognizing his ties to others. He accepts his own fate, knowing that "readiness is all".

Lear, his world in ruins of his own making, can find salvation only through madness, but in his reconciliation with Cordelia, he too finds that destiny can be identified with, "as if we were God's spies". As Edgar puts it, sounding very like Hamlet, "Ripeness is all".

Othello, drawn into evil by an incapacity for trust, recognizes his failing and kills himself. The power of love-the importance of our bonds to others-is again upheld.

In *Macbeth,* the same point is made negatively, as the protagonist's rejection of love and loyalty leads to an extreme human isolation, where "Life's but a walking shadow". In each of the 4 major tragedies, a single protagonist grows in self-awareness and knowledge of human nature, though he cannot stop his disaster.

In the later Roman tragedies, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus* we find the same pattern. But these differ from their predecessors in that the central figures are placed in a complex social and political context, and the plays are strongly concerned with the relationship between the individual and the society, with less focus on the emotional development of the tragic hero. *Timon of Athens* is a flawed effort that Shakespeare left incomplete.

Shakespeare's tragedies are disturbing plays. We feel horror at the stories, and pity for the victims. That this pity extends to doers of evil as well - Macbeth, Othello, Lear, Coriolanus - attests

to the dramatist's power. We recognise the nobility of the human spirit, which may err catastrophically but which

does so through an excess of strength, challenging its own limits. In a tragic universe, we are all flawed precisely because we are human, and Shakespeare's tragic heroes embody this inexorable feature of life.

III. HISTORY PLAYS . I

Shakespeare's 10 plays deal with events in English history.

(1) Minor Tetralogy - Henry VI 3 Parts, and Richard III

(2) King John

(3) Major Tetralogy - Richard II, Henry IV 2 Parts, and Henry V.

(4) Henry VIII.

The Tetralogies are Shakespeare's major achievement in the histories and deal with English history from 1398 to 1485.

The central theme of the history plays is political - they deal with the gain and loss of power - but Shakespeare transcended this subject. As he wrote his histories, the playwright increasingly pursued the definition of the perfect king. After presenting two distinctly bad rulers, the ineffectual Henry VI and the villainous Richard III, he turned to a consideration of kingly virtues. He began to explore the psychology of political leaders, and these plays are at their best as much psychological as historical.

Not content to deal with the nature of kingship solely from the point of view of the rulers, Shakespeare also focuses on the lives of the common people of England, especially in the major tetralogy. Sometimes fictitious minor figures, such as the Gardener in Richard III, fulfill an important function simply by offering their own interpretation of political events and historical personalities and thus influencing the reader's responses. But many common people are developed as

characters in their own right. Indeed, in the *Henry IV* plays, often considered the greatest of his histories, Falstaff and a number of fully sketched minor characters offer a sort of national group portrait that is contrasted with political history. The juxtaposition generates a richly stimulating set of relationships.

Those secular accounts of the past, neither legendary nor religious, that were presented on the stage- and were highly popular-reflect the Elizabethan era's intense interest in history. In the late 16th century, when these plays were written, England was undergoing a great crisis. As a leading Protestant state, it found itself at odds, with the great Catholic powers of counter-Reformation Europe, including its traditional enemy, France, and a new foe, Spain. The latter, at the height of its power, was a very dangerous adversary, and England felt seriously imperiled until the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. This situation sparked a tremendous patriotism among all classes of English society, and with that came an increasing interest in the nation's history, an interest that the theatre was of course delighted to serve.

Written not long after the peak of nationalistic fervour in 1588, the history plays, which were extremely popular, deal with political events of England, like the Wars of the Roses, the significance of which the Elizabethans were very much aware. Moreover, even though in hindsight the reign of Elizabeth seems very different from those of the troubled 15th century, this was not so clear at the time. A number of threats to the government arose and the people felt a strong fear of civil war and anarchy; for both moral and practical reasons they valued an orderly society ruled by a strong monarch. The history plays addressed this attitude by presenting a lesson in the evils of national disunity.

This view of English history was held not only by both the playwright and most of his audience, but also by the historians whose works Shakespeare consulted. When the Tudor dynasty came to power, among the policies adopted by King Henry VII was the use of scholarly propaganda-to justify his seizure of the throne. He encouraged and commissioned various works of history and biography to emphasize the faults of earlier rulers and present his own accession as the nation's salvation. Among them was an official history of England by the Italian humanist Polydore Vergil, which was to have a strong influence on subsequent historians including Holinshed and Hall, whose chronicles were Shakespeare's chief sources. Thus Shakespeare saw, and passed on, a story of inevitable progress towards the benevolent reign of the Tudors. The sources available.to Shakespeare were highly unreliable by modern historical standards. In any case, Shakespeare was not writing history; he was concerned with dramatic values more than with historical accuracy.

Other Elizabethan playwrights also wrote histories but only Shakespeare's work has survived. In writing history plays Shakespeare always pursued his own concerns, exploring political values and social relations. Throughout his career he was preoccupied with the value of order in society. Shakespeare believed, as is evident in *Henry V,* in the need for authority, but he also showed a distrust of those who held authority. Thus the history plays point to an underlying characteristic of human societies-the fact that political power inspires disturbing fears as well as profound ideals.

IV. PROBLEM PLAYS

Three of Shakespeare's comedies-A(*I's Well That Ends Well, Measure for Measure* and *Troilus and Cressida* are called problem plays. They are potent satires characterised by

disturbingly ambiguous points of view and seemingly cynical attitudes towards sexual and social relations. These plays - written around 16021604 - are concerned with basic elements of life, sex and death, and the psychological and social

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complications they give rise to. These issues are problematic, and the plays further stress this by pointedly offering no clear-cut resolutions, leaving audiences with a painful awareness of life's difficulties.

The phrase 'problem play' was first applied to these plays - as well as to Hamlet - by Frederick Boas in his book *Shakespeare and his Predecessors.* In Boas's time the phrase was used to refer to the works of playwrights like Ibsen and Shaw whose plays dealt frankly and purposefully with social problems. Shakespeare's problem plays too are indeed concerned with society and its discontents.

V. **ROMAN PLAYS**

Three plays of Shakespeare are set in ancient Rome - *Julius Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus.* The much earlier *Titus Andronicus,* though Roman in setting, is generally excluded from this classification because it is a timeless tale that does not involve any real, historical world. Each of the Roman plays is a tragedy, but they are unlike the other tragedies, which are placed in virtually imaginary historical situations. These works are complicated by the history of ancient Rome, which is reasonably accurately presented, and they are thus similar to the history plays.

When he wrote plays about ancient Rome, Shakespeare dealt with material that was highly meaningful to his age. Due to the Renaissance rediscovery of classical literature and art, the Roman era in the Mediterranean world was seen as the high-watermark of Western culture, and the general outlines of its history were familiar to all educated people. Thus the politics of that world, and the lives of its illustrious personages were viewed with great interest. The moral questions found in the careers of Coriolanus, Brutus and Antony had particular importance as they

were examples taken from the most important epoch in the development of western polities.

Rome's history also had importance to Christianity because it was thought of as the period of Christianity's birth. In particular, the establishment of the empire was often perceived as evidence of God's intervention in human affairs.

In fact, it is important to the Roman plays that the Roman Republic was pre-Christian. Shakespeare's repeated allusions to suicide as an honourable alternative to defeat marks a striking differehce in pre-Christian morality. The suicides indeed point to the most important distinction of the Roman tragedies: they lack Christianity's belief in divine providence as a final arbiter of human affairs. Without God's promised redemption, the moral questions of the classical world had to be resolved within an earth-bound universe of references. The protagonists of Roman plays cannot recognize an error and gain divine forgiveness, nor can they be confident that he is right in the face of worldly defeat. Hence there is a paradox in their characters. The consequence is that Rome's conflicts are never clearly organized on lines of 'good' and 'evil' - each side contains elements of both.

VI. **ROMANCES**

Shakespeare's late comedies are called romances: *Pericles, Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale, The Tempest* and (sometimes) *The Two Noble Kinsmen.* They are tragicomedies in the broadest sense of the term.

All of the romances share a number of themes. The theme of separation and reunion of family members is highly important. The related idea of exile also features in the romances, with the banished characters-usually rulers or rulers-to be-restored to their rightful homes at the play's end. Another theme, jealousy, is prominent in The *Winter's Tale, Cymbeline* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen;* it has minor importance in *Pericles* and The *Tempest.*

Most significant, the romances all speak to the need for patience in adversity and the importance of providence in human affairs. This visionary conception outweighs any given individual's fate or even the development of individual personalities.

Compared with earlier plays, realistic characterization in the romances is weak, instead, the characters' symbolic meaning in pronounced. The plots of these plays offer improbable events in exotic locales. Their characters are frequently subject to long journeys, often involving shipwrecks. Seemingly magical developments arise-with real sorcery in *The* Tempest-and supernatural beings appear. These developments are elaborately represented, and all of the romances rely heavily on spectacular scenic effects.

In all these respects, the romances are based on a tradition 6T romantic literature going back at least to Hellenistic Greece, in which love serves as the trigger for extraordinary adventures. In this tradition love is subjected to abnormal strains - often involving jealous intrigues and conflicts between male friendship and romantic love - and there aFe fantastic journeys to exotic lands, encounters with chivalrous knights and allegorical appearances of supernatural beings. Absurdly improbable coincidences and mistaken identities complicate the plot, though everything is resolved in a conventional happy ending. The protagonists are also conventional, their chief distinction being their noble or royal blood.

In the romances Shakespeare returned to an idea that had been prominent in his earlier comedies- young lovers are united after various tribulations. Now, however, the focus is not only on the young lovers, but also encompasses the older generation, once the opponents of love. At the end of these plays, the emphasis is not on reward and punishment but rather on the reunion of parents and children and the hopeful prospect of new

generations to come. The romances concern themselves with the lovers not for their own

sake but for their effect on the whole continuum of life. This broad canvas is enlarged even further to cosmic dimensions with the many images of the supernatural.

The romances conclude in a spirit of hope, as the main characters are reunited in an aura of reconciliation-a favourite motif throughout Shakespeare's career. The natural good in humanity is put under pressure but preserved through the action of providence. An emphasis on the cycle of regeneration-both in the traditional comedic emphasis on marriage and in the theme of reunited families-offers a guarantee that the preservation will be lasting.

VII. POETRY

Shakespeare's first published works were two narrative poems, *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594). In 1599 a volume of poetry entitled *The Passionate Pilgrim* was published and attributed entirely to Shakespeare. However, only five of the poems are definitely considered his, two appearing in other versions in the *Sonnets* and three in *Love's Labour's Lost.*. A love elegy, *The Phoenix and the Turtle,* was published in 1601. In the 1980s and 90s many Elizabethan scholars concluded that a poem published in 1612 entitled *A Funeral Elegy* and signed "W.S." exhibits many Shakespearean characteristics; it has not yet been definitely included in the canon.

Shakespeare's sonnets are by far his most important non-dramatic poetry. They were first published in 1609, although many of them had certainly been circulated privately before this, and it is generally agreed that the poems were written sometime in the 1590s. Scholars have long debated the order of the poems and the degree of autobiographical content.

The first 126 of the 154 sonnets are addressed to a young man whose identity has long intrigued scholars. The publisher,

Thomas Thorpe, wrote a dedication to the first edition in which he claimed that a person with the initials W. H. had inspired the sonnets. Some have thought these letters to be the transposed initials of Henry Wriothesley, 3rd earl of Southampton, to whom Shakespeare dedicated *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece;* or they are possibly the initials of William Herbert, 3rd earl of Pembroke, whose connection with Shakespeare is more tenuous. The identity of the dark lady addressed in sonnets 127-152 has also been the object of much conjecture but no proof. The sonnets are marked by the recurring themes of beauty, youthful beauty ravaged by time, and the ability of love and art to transcend time and even death.

SHAKESPEAREAN CRITICISM

There has been a great variety of critical approach to Shakespeare's work since his death. During the 17th and 18th centuries, Shakespeare was both admired and condemned. Since then, much of the adverse criticism has not been considered relevant, although certain issues have continued to interest critics throughout the years. For instance, charges against his moral propriety were made by Samuel Johnson in the 18th century and by George Bernard Shaw in the 20th.

Early criticism was directed primarily at questions of form. Shakespeare was criticized for mixing comedy and tragedy and failing to observe the unities of time and place prescribed by the rules of classical drama. Dryden and Johnson were among the critics claiming that he had corrupted the language with false wit, puns, and ambiguity. While some of his early plays might justly be charged with a frivolous use of such devices, 20thcentury criticism has tended to praise their use in later plays as adding depth and resonance of meaning.

Generally critics of the 17th and 18th century accused Shakespeare of a want of artistic restraint while praising him for a fecund imagination. Samuel Johnson, while agreeing with many earlier criticisms, defended Shakespeare on the question of classical rules. On the issue of unity of time and place he argued that no one considers the stage play to be real life anyway. Johnson inaugurated the criticism of Shakespeare's characters that reached its culmination in the late 19th century with the work of A. C. Bradley. The German critics Gotthold Lessing and Augustus Wilhelm von Schlegel saw Shakespeare as a romantic, different in type from the classical poets, but on equal footing. Schlegel first elucidated the structural unity of Shakespeare's plays, a concept of unity that is developed much more completely by the English poet and critic Samuel Coleridge. .

While Schlegel and Coleridge were establishing Shakespeare's plays as artistic, organic unities, such 19thcentury critics as the German Georg Gervinus and the Irishman Edward Dowden were trying to- see positive moral tendencies in the plays. The 19th-century English critic William Hazlitt, who continued the development of character analysis begun by Johnson, considered each Shakespearean character to be unique, but found a unity through analogy and gradation of characterization. While A. C. Bradley marks the culmination of romantic 19th-century character study, he also suggested that the plays had unifying imagistic atmospheres, an idea that was further developed in the 20th century.

The tendency in 20th-century criticism has been to abandon both the study of character as independent personality and the assumption that moral considerations can be separated from their dramatic and aesthetic context. The plays have been increasingly viewed in terms of the unity of image, metaphor, and tone. Caroline Spurgeon began the careful classification of Shakespeare's imagery, and although her attempts were later

felt to be somewhat naive and morally biased, her work is a landmark in Shakespearean criticism. Other important trends in 20th-century criticism include the Freudian approach,

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such as Ernest Jones's Oedipal interpretation of Hamlet; the study of Shakespeare in terms of the Elizabethan world view and Elizabethan stage conventions; and the study of the plays in mythic terms.

CHAPTER SEVEN

POST-SHAKESPEAREAN DRAMA: BEN JONSON BEN JONSON

Ben Jonson was a dramatist, poet, scholar and writer of court masques. In his youth he joined a strolling company of players for whom he acted the part of Hieronimo in *The Spanish Tragedy,* a play for which he wrote additional scenes. He is said to have been fearless and quarrelsome, and once was charged of murder. He was probably one of the members of the Friday Street Club (one of the earliest of English Clubs) which met at the Mermaid Tavern and which included Shakespeare, Selden, Donne, Beaumont and Fletcher. (This Club was founded by Ralegh)

Jonson's first important play, with Shakespeare in its cast, was *Every Man in His Humour.* It was followed by *Every Man Out of His Humour* and *Cynthia's Revels.* His first extant tragedy is *Sejanus* and his first court masque The *Masque of Blackness* written for Queen Anne who appears as a negress in the masque. At this time Jonson, along with Chapman and Marston, wrote *Eastward Hoe,* and Chapman and Jonson were imprisoned, for the comedy contained a passage derogatory of the Scots. Then followed his major plays*Volpone or The Fox,* which contains the famous characters Mosca and Corbaccio, *Epicene or The Silent Woman,* which contains the characters Morose and Cutbeard, (Dryden thought this the most perfectly plotted of all comedies), The *Alchemist,* with characters like Dame Pliant and Lovewit, and

Bartholomew Fair. His later plays-*The Devil is an Ass, A Tale of a Tub* (Swift has written a work of the same name), etc. show a reliance on allegory and symbolism. The genre of court-masque reached its perfection in Jonson's hands. He introduced into it the 'anti-masque', an antithetical, usually disorderly, prelude to the main action which served to highlight and contrast the central theme of political and social harmony. His *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue* gave Milton his idea for *Comus.* His non-dramatic verse includes a translation of Horace's *Ars Poetica.* [Jonson was a favourite of King James I, hence his prolific output of masques]. His 2nd tragedy is *Catiline.*

Every Man in his Humour marked an epoch in the history of drama; no comedy had ever appeared with a more self-conscious flourish. In this play, the young playwright emerged with a revolutionary manifests, in which a new theory of comedy was put into practice. Jonson's theory of a Comedy of Humours is expounded in the prologue to the play where a 'humour' is the embodiment in one of the character of some dominating individual passion. The cardinal humours, as suggested by medieval thinkers, whose balance was thought to determine a man's nature, were blood, phlegm, choler (yellow bile) and melancholy (black bile). In the prologue Jonson criticizes romantic drama which allows the most ridiculous improbabilities of plot and scene. As a classical scholar he preferred to adhere to the unities. He was against melodrama and farce, and advocated realism which would confine comedy to an image of the times. Jonson's theory was supported by a vigorous display of learning and reason. Yet his plays are little read or enacted, and are as good as dead except to the student of literature. This is because his method is laboriously pedantic and his characters, in whom one or the other of the humours exceed to result in a folly or affection, are highly artificial. His plays, though they laugh at the

'humour' of the characters, fail to amuse and lack in the shaping spirit of imagination.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ELIZABETHAN
POETRY AFTER SPENSER SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

In *Arcadia,* Sidney's poetic imagination makes itself present in the prose passages rather than the verse. In the verse pieces he indulges in metrical experiment, resulting in a laboured artificiality. The sonnets in *Arcadia* are mostly in the English form. But Sidney introduces variations' in the form. Apart from form, the sonnets in *Arcadia* are of the imitative Petrarchan type, playing with conceits, clothing sentiment in fanciful embroidery.

Astrophel and Stella changes over from the languor of *Arcadia* to the tumultuous riot of passion, based, as in other Elizabethan sonnet-series, on authentic personal experience, on Sidney's undying love for Penelope Devereaux. This is in support of the theory that desire is the strongest literary inspiration of Elizabethan love sonnets. Lamb declared that Sidney's sonnets were written "in the very hey-day of his blood". Indeed, their magical quality is born of their union of hot-blooded passion with super-sensual idealism. Virtue herself takes Stella's shape and there's nothing that their splendid passion cannot draw into its flaming orbit. Thus this sonnet-cycle has something of the sweep and purgative effect of tragedy.

CHAPTER NINE
ELIZABETHAN PROSE WRITERS

The Elizabethan prose that proved most influential on the evolution of modern prose was written not by the great writers Hooker, Bacon and Ralegh, but by a more popular class, the story-tellers and pamphleteers. The demands of narrative, argument and satire called forth in the 16th and 17th centuries a lighter and more direct style that eventually led to the entirely modern prose of Defoe, Addison and Swift.

THE ELIZABETHAN 'NOVEL'

The popular 'novels' and stories of the 16th century and earlier were not English in origin, but translated or adapted from Italian, Spanish or French. Before *Pettie's Palace,* there were Painter's *Palace of Pleasure,* Fenton's *Tragical Discourses* and a rendering of *Hecatommithi.* Barnaby Rich's *Farewell to Military Profession* came from the French of Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques.* There were stories available for the dramatists from Ser Giovanni, Straparola, Montemayor, as well as much older stories from Heliodorus and other medieval writers. Anthony Munday, not only wrote a complementary piece to *Euphues* in his *Zelanto, the Fountain of Fame,* but made a business of translation from French, Spanish and Italian, producing translations of romances of an obsolete chivalry.

In the early 17th century, translation of the Spanish picaresque stories began and David Rowland's *The • Celestina* was one such work. However it is doubtful whether an Elizabethan 'novel' of picaresque cast like Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller* was indebted to French models. But though the debt to French and Italian story-tellers is the most striking in the dramatists, the foreign influence on the writers of fiction in bringing a ' new fashion of plot, new sentiments and traditions is no less considerable.

THE PAMPHLETEERS and STORY-TELLERS

Greene: A short-lived but most prolific author, Robert Greene, followed Lyly's style and the model of pastoral romance set by Sidney in a number of love-stories, of which *Pandosto, or Dorastus and Fawnia* gave Shakespeare materials for The *Winter's Tale;* and then began a series of non-descript works, half-novel and half-descriptive articles, which give vivid glimpses of the seamy side of Elizabethan life. Much of his work is didactic and written in the Euphuistic style.

Lodge: Thomas Lodge's stories belong to the same class as Greene's sentimental idylls and are written in an euphuistic style. His most pleasing work is *Rosalynde* in which he retold the old English tale of Gamelyn and provided a plot and figures that required only to be developed into characters in As You *Like It.*

Nashe: Thomas Nashe, like Greene a fellow at Cambridge, and very like Greene in his short and merry life, wrote pamphlets like *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem* that are more successful than Greene's in sketching London life and character. *The Unfortunate Traveller* is perhaps the first regular picaresque story in English, in which an English page has rambling adventures all over Europe including Germany, France and Italy. Historical characters such

as Surrey, Erasmus and Sir Thomas More figure in the story. The most realistic of Elizabethan 'novels', it nevertheless shows how difficult it still was to artistically blend the actual and the imaginative. This, in fact, is the common defect of Elizabethan fiction. [As an analytical portrayal of life, *Euphues* prefigures the modern novel; but it does this ineffectively, and its style marks it, as the *Arcadia* is marked, as a late attempt to reinvigorate an obsolete genre - the romance] Of all Elizabethan attempts at the novel, *The Unfortunate Traveller* does indeed show the nearest approximation to future.

Nashe cared more for vigour than elegance. He gave up euphuism after his early works, .and wrote novels in the style of a pamphleteer. His style is marked by the vehemence of feeling as well as his instinctive fondness for alliteration and compound epithets. ""

Dekker: Thomas Dekker, the author of *The Bachelors' Banquet,* wrote pamphlets in the style of Greene and Nashe. In *The Seven Deadly Sins of London* he produced some good realism and a vigorous style.

Other 'novelists' of this period include Nicholas Breton, Emanuel Ford and Thomas Deloney. Much pamphleteering of this period was in connection with the Martin Marprelate controversy between the Puritans and the high Anglicans.

GREAT PROSE

Hooker: Richard Hooker was one of the saintly figures affectionately portrayed in Isaac Walton's *Lives.* The great work of his life was *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity,* a methodical defence of the church system. Hooker argued that no particular form of ecclesiastical government was laid down by the Scripture, which

allowed freedom to the churches to select any polity that was not inconsistent with religion. The greatness of this work lies in his liberal comprehension of opposite points of view, the broad philosophic treatment of his theme as well as his admirable style. Hooker, even more than Bacon and Ralegh, was unaffected by the tendencies that were bringing literary language close to the raciness, terseness and simplicity of the vernacular. His rhetoric employed a learned vocabulary, built complex series of clauses into finely turned sentences, having the stately rhythm of Latin prose. His learning and imagination gave a richness and sublimity to his eloquence, very different from the euphuistic style'and the artificial prose-poetry of Sidney.

FRANCIS BACON

Bacon was an important official in the courts of Elizabeth and James until he was deprived of his offices and imprisoned for having received bribes.

His major English works are Essays *Civil and Moral, The Advancement of Learning, The History of Henry VII, The New Atlantis* and *Sylva Sylvarum* (incomplete). In Latin he proposed to write a great philosophical work which he finished only in parts. This work propounded the Baconian philosophy of the Great Instauration, the fundamental purpose of which was the extension and organization of human knowledge.

Bacon had no more faith than his precursors in the great destinies of the English language and wished even his own English works to be translated into Latin for the sake of permanence. His essays are entirely different from those of the discursive Montaigne, they are a string of aphorisms, sparkling with wit as well as luminous wisdom. Bacon's bent towards aphoristic exposition of thought is held in check in his other works by the procession of his great argument.

SIR **WALTER RALEGH**

Walter Ralegh, courtier, soldier and explorer, wrote several fine sonnets and other poems, as well as accounts of his travels and adventures. His prose was clear and unassuming. The gigantic *History of the World* contains some of the most eloquent and sonorous passages in English prose literature.

CHAPTER TEN
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY POETRY

INTRODUCTION TO THE AGE

The 17th century is marked by the long struggle between the King and the Parliament which came to its climax with the execution of Charles I in 1649. The struggle was in part political, in part religious. The country suffered the disturbance and distraction of a civil war. England was sharply divided, class against class. Generally speaking, the aristocracy and their dependents were Cavaliers; the commercial and trading classes supported the Parliament.

The growth of Puritanism had important consequences in the social and literary life of the nation. Not because the Puritans were ever strong numerically, but their leaders were men of strong and serious character, calmly determined and obstinately fanatical. They were especially hostile to the theatre, as we may read in Prynne's *Histriomastix* and there was a complete closure of all dramatic performances in 1642 - a final blow to the languishing Elizabethan drama. Art and Literature came under a similar suspicion, unless they were didactic in intention. It is thus

natural that no great national literature thrived during the period of Puritan ascendancy. Cromwell and his government became bitterly unpopular and after his death there was a general welcome to the exiled Charles.

Charles II was tolerant and broad-minded, but he was dissolute, cynical and unprincipled, and his court soon became as scandalous as it was merry. In literature he preferred wit and sparkle to imagination and ecstasy; the rhetoric of Dryden's plays and the impudent satire of *Hudibras* were morcpleasing to him than a dozen Paradise Losts. In fostering a taste for such plain and unambiguous writing he did English prose an immense service. When the theatres reopened, two types of plays were prevalent - the heroic drama and the comedy of manners. Both these types are of strong literary and sodal interest, but even when they resound in Dryden's best verse, they are essentially prosaic. The characteristic work of the age is prose in itself or in conception.. In the famous diaries of Pepys and Evelyn we can read in prose about the everyday lives and thoughts of men. Even though Charles and his court did not, the people read Bunyan and they could still behold the beauty of imaginative prose that had lucidity and force.

Finally, we have to credit Charles with his encouragement of science through the foundation of the Royal Society (1661). The work of this famous institution is a memorial more lasting than bronze to Charles's tastes.

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JOHN MILTON

In his youth (as seen in his Latin epistle to Diodati - *Epitaphium Damonis)* Milton was a gentle and sociable youth, a lover of music, dancing, women, plays and country pleasures; at the same time studious, religious, high-minded and modest, a man of Protestant views. His early works include *L'Allegro* and /(Penseroso, *Arcades, Comus* and *Lycidas.* The first two of these offer a quintessence of English life, and the contrast in these 2 poems is that of 2 moods. Under one influence a man seeks light-hearted mirth. He delights in the cheerful sights and sounds of the morning, in the haytime and the harvest, in the simple feasts of the country folk. If he has left the country for the town, his pleasure is in pomps and pageants, in sumptuous weddings, in comedies and masques. Under the other influence he loves the quietude of the country, the trim garden in the repose of evening, the study of astronomy and philosophy, the sterner side of poetry the more religious notes of music. Arcades and Comus (a masque presented at Ludlow Castle) were set to music by Henry Lawes. Appearing after the publication of Prynne's *Histriomastix* (a Puritan work attacking stage plays) they show that Milton did not share the extreme Puritan view that drama is evil in itself. Not the use of the dramatic form but its misuse was the evil. *Comus* is Milton's first exercise in blank verse. *Lycidas* is a pastoral elegy on the death of Edward King. In this poem Milton refers to the myths of the ancient world, the teachings of Christianity and the political and ecclesiastical problems of Milton's own time. Milton's sonnets are in the Petrarchan form, 5 of them being written in Latin. Many of the sonnets serve as outlets to the deep poetic feeling which only awaited leisure for the making of a great work.

Milton returned to poetry in the last phase of his career. The epic poem *Paradise Lost,* originally in 10 books and subsequently

rearranged in 12, was, first printed in 1667. Summary of the poem

Bk I - The poet states his theme (the Fall of Man through Disobedience) and his aim (to justify the ways of God to men). The defeated archangel Satan and Beelzebub are seen to be in the burning lake of hell.

Satan convenes a council and his palace Pandemonium is built.

Bk II - The Council debates over the means of revenge. Beelzebub announces the creation of earth and man.

Satan undertakes to visit earth alone.

Bk III - Milton invokes celestial light to illumine the darkness of his eyes. God is described and his success as

well as the fall of man through free will is foretold. The Son of God offers himself as a ransom and is exalted

as the Saviour. Satan alights on earth.

Bk IV - Satan overhears the conversation of Adam and Eve about the Forbidden tree of Knowledge and resolves

to tempt them.

Bk V - Eve has a dream of temptation inspired by Satan. Raphael, sent by God, warns Adam about the

temptation. Raphael's narration about Satan's rebellion.

Bk VI - Raphael's narration.

Bk VII - Raphael's narration ends with the creation of the earth and man.

Bk VIII - Adam talks of his life in Eden, the creation of Eve, etc.

Bk IX - Satan tempts in the body of a serpent, Eve brings Adam to the Forbidden fruit; Adam, recognizing that

she is doomed, resolves to perish with her; they eat the fruit, lose innocence.

Bk X - Adam and Eve confess before the Son of God.

Bk XI - Michael relates to them their future-the death of Abel, Flood, the New Covenant.

Bk XII - Michael narrates the rest of the O.T. and the corrupt state of the Church until the Second Coming.

In *Paradise Lost* Milton tried to do away with the fictitious element which he saw in the great epics of Greece. He could not foresee an age to which the story of Adam would appear a mere myth. But this resolve deprived his own work of freshness and diverted him from the evergreen themes of the passions and purposes of man. The verse of *Paradise Lost* shows a spontaneous ease and is the natural product of previous thought. *Paradise Lost* was first designed as a drama and it still has a strong dramatic element, especially in the characterization of Satan. Dryden, as well as later critics, have said that Satan is the hero of the poem.

As yielding to the temptation had brought the Fall of Man, so in *Paradise Regained* Milton presents the foiling of temptation as the cause of man's restoration. In the earlier work there is unity, but,not simplicity. Milton's taste, growing ever simpler, preferred *Paradise Regained?* because its theme has unity as well as simplicity. But the later work is far below in greatness and is a mere repetition of the theme of eternal conflict between good and evil.

For *Samson Agonistes,* published along with Paradise Regained, Milton took a hero whose physical affliction was the same as his own. Though a closet drama modelled on Greek tragedy, critics have claimed that its spirit is more Hebraic (or Christian) than Hellenic.

As a writer, Milton's towering stature was recognized early. Although appreciated as a master of polemical prose as well as of subtle lyric harmony, his reputation rests largely on *Paradise Lost,* which Dryden

described as "one of the greatest, most noble and sublime poems which either this age or nation has produced". Poets and critics of the 18th century were profoundly influenced by Milton's use of blank verse and

BpSntiXa^HnnrhLenemT(,me'uB^evef7 *then there were ™>™>rs* of dissent from Dr. Johnson. Addison, Bentley and others. Blake, in his *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell,* commented that Milton was "the Devil's

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party without knowing it". Shelley regarded Satan as the real hero of the poem. In the 20th century, T.S. Eliot was a strong critic of Milton.

MILTON'S GRAND STYLE

Sublimity of thought and grandeur of style mark Milton's verse, where matter, meaning and melody blend harmoniously together. Milton is vexed with rhyme and advocates the free use of epic verse (blank verse) so that he may explore all possibilities of poetic expression. He considered rhyme to be an invention of a barbarous age and no necessary adjunct or ornament to a poem. Milton improved upon the blank verse used by Shakespeare and his followers: he added latinisms, inversions, periphrases, and other paraphernalia. Critics do not take the same view of this innovative blank verse. Blank verse is known for its concentration and flexibility, and Milton deprived it of these qualities. But those readers who value the ceremonical aloofness of epic verse hold that these sacrifices were worthwhile. Miltonic epic verse, cannot even be compared to dramatic blank verse - the former is heroic and used for achieving a grandeur and loftiness that suited Milton's themes.

Milton's verse is highly stylized, effortlessly perfected by a mastermind. It is written in magnificent, majestic language and its sound and gait are unparalleled in English poetry. The management of sound and stress creates a sonorous effect. In spite of the many latinisms and allusions, Milton's verse is strikingly simple and beautiful. The poet is never obscure in his lines; he is always lucid. Milton often varies his style to relieve the reader from monotony. C.S. Lewis said of his style that "it is a grand great stream upon which we are embarked."

Milton's similes impress the readers intellectually, aesthetically and physically - they are not only appropriate to the situations but also open up a new world of myths, fables and classical allusions. Miltonic similes, though classical, are very original and different. Here the vehicle of course resembles the tenor, but the simile does not stop there. Many more points of interest are quickly and successively brought in, creating a rich matrix of comparisons. Sound, meaning, thought and feeling get integrated. These similes are also digressive and echo mythology as well as a great tradition of literature which the epic falls back upon. Pope said rightly of his style: "what oft was thought but never so well expressed".

It can probably be argued that Milton's Grand Style does not suit lighter themes. But Milton was a man of solemn thought and there is not one line that he has written in the lighter vein. All his works deal with serious themes in a classical manner. They are carefully calculated to produce a mighty impression upon the ear, mind and imagination of men of scholarship. That they did superbly well, and shall continue so in the days to come.

THE METAPHYSICALS AND CAVALIERS

By the end of the Elizabethan era lyrical poetry and sonneteering had grown stale in the artifice of the conventions of chivalry and courtly love. To rescue poetry from such pretensions, to restore to it its high seriousness, became the object of the early 17th century. In this connection much work was done by a group of poets whom Johnson (in his *Life of Cowley)* called the 'Metaphysical' School. Accepting the Platonic definition of the poet as an interpreter of divine mysteries and drawing from it the corollary that he might become the handmaid of natural philosophy, these writers tried to ennoble poetry by applying it to the phenomena of science. Poetry was no longer "a pretty toy" to win a mistress, but an arduous quest

undertaken for a higher satisfaction. The style, to be worthy of the subject, must be cryptic and difficult. In short, poetry, while retaining the note of inspiration, was to convey a sense of intellectual efforts. However, the diction should be simple and the language unpolished, reflecting the roughness of life. The result of this theory is to be found in the elaborate subtleties of Donne and the abrupt "strong lines" of Cleveland.

JOHN DONNE

The inductive method advocated by Descartes and Bacon in the spheres of philosophy and science was first applied by Donne to the problems of love. Throwing aside the chivalric love doctrine, he set himself to discover the laws of the heart by scrutinizing the emotions themselves. His quasi-scientific attitude and determination to find what is natural sets Donne apart from other contemporary poets, and marks the change from medieval to modern sentiment.

Donne's early secular poetry is characterized by brutal sensuality, coarse cynicism, fury, hate and despair, while his later religious verse centres on mystical rapture and valiant faith. His control over his ideas is often uncertain. A cynical fancy will change under his pen to a noble surmise, and a lofty speculation to a cheap jibe. He seems to have written as a means of self-revelation, following the chance connections of ideas as they surged through his brain. He turned similes to metaphysical conceits, yoking dissimilar ideas violently together. His imagery is intellectual rather than sensuous, and he bases his poems on syllogistic argument. Donne, and more so, the other Metaphysicals like Herrick and Marvell, employed the 'carpe diem' philosophy *in his* (their) poetry. It was Herrick who wrote: "gather ye rosebuds while ye may".

Donne's poems are original, serious, fervent, and restless; and their sincerity is somehow emphasised by the sense of effort which they always convey. His poems were borne of original

inspiration, and are the adventures of an inquiring spirit, "voyaging through strange seas of thought,
alone".

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JOHN CLEVELAND

Cleveland seems to have been the leader of a "rugged" sect of Cambridge poets (as opposed to the "court sect" led by Davenant) who cultivated an obscure and harsh style of verse called "strong lines". The obscurity of style, which disgusted many critics including Hobbes and Dryden, was in fact the reason for Cleveland's popularity.

The modern critic will however agree that Cleveland's poems are overloaded with conceits. He never dwells upon a single conceit, but leaps from one to another suddenly, at right angles to the line of progress of the poem. This coarse fertility gave him his fame, but also killed the "Metaphysical" style as a literary medium. The novelty of his style is often so surprising that it becomes, unintentionally though, comic.

THE EARLIER CAVALIERS

Thomas Carew, in his poetry, uses Donne's thoughts in a different manner and for a different end, trying to mitigate their harshness in his mellifluous verse. He often makes Donne's exalted fancies trivial and mean-the sonorous slowness, the awkward syntax and the general sense of effort which add much to Donne's power have vanished in Carew's verse.

Throughout Sir John Suckling's poetry, there runs a vein of cynicism which he had learned from Donne. He excels Carew in his power of vulgarizing what he borrows, but unlike Carew, he never attempts to follow Donne in his nobler flights. Suckling's verse voices the swaggering philosophy of disillusion which marks all subsequent Cavalier poetry.

Many of Richard Lovelace's poetry breathes the finer sentiments of chivalrous love that is absent in Cavalier poetry. But the rest of his verse is marked by cynicism and disillusionment. Having little wit and no humour, he is often tedious and lacks the ease of Suckling. But he was always original and fell in with the fashion of writing 'strong lines'.

Robert Herrick, the author of *Hesperides,* was a fashionable wit before he took holy orders. Though he was faced with the dismal prospect of writing religious verse, he could not quite forsake his old self. He was a poet of the 'senses', not of sensibility-his verse is full of scents, sounds and colours. He is entirely unromantic, unpreoccupied with desire, and therefore unafraid of it. At his touch the fairies emerge frorr their glamour to become merely exquisite miniatures of man, and Nature, shorn of the mystery that she helc for many of his contemporaries, exists to provide coronals for Julia (one of the many mistresses he invented and texts for his own meditations. He succeeds best with themes which allowed of a semi-classical treatment.

THE RELIGIOUS POETS

George Herbert's poetry has been supposed to show the influence of Donne. But Herbert, unliki Donne, always wrote as simply as he could. The conceits and quibbles of his poems were admitted onl on sufferance. Herbert was a fanatic neither in religion nor poetry. Far from following Donne in hi revolt against Elizabethan literary fashions, he adopts them all placidly. The Temple contains sonnet and many Arcadian and euphuistic turns of expression. He did not try, like Donne, to evolve a new style but only sought to demonstrate how the style already in existence might be applied to pious use: Donne's conceits are the substance of his thought, Herbert's are nearly always illustrations

of a though that would be complete without them. It is the simplicity of Herbert that is the secret of his power.

Though Richard Crashaw, for a time, wrote "strong lines", his poetry shows a delicacy of sentimer and fancy. The turning-point in his career was his reading of the works of St. Teresa. This completed h religious and imaginative development, and resulted in the amazing poems - Hymn to St. Teresa, The Flamir Heart and Odes. He makes no concessions to human weakness. Like most mystics, he assumes a certa spiritual condition in his audience, and hence his readership is limited. Crashaw lays bold hands on the wi metaphors of passion, dedicating them to the creator as the spoils of war. The images of wounds and bloc which the ordinary hymn-writer makes disgusting, and the old Apocalyptic symbols, become in Crashaw hands a new language of the soul.

In his youth Henry Vaughan imitated Donne's condensed and abrupt style of verse, but with litt effect. Later he turned to Cleveland's 'strong lines'. His best work *Silex Scintillans* is inspired by Herbert *Temple.* But Herbert, to Crashaw, was a stimulus rather than a schooling. The idea of Nature as one gre emanation of the Holy Spirit, and of himself as part of it, is always present to his mind, and gives his poetry quality that reminds one of Wordsworth rather than of Herbert. In The Retreat Vaughan looks wistfully back his childhood as a state of innocence. In his flashes of mystic insight Vaughan is a better poet than Herbei but he lacks the graceful rhetoric with which the latter can enhance the commonplace. Also, his eloquen falters as his vision fades.

Most of Thomas Traherne's verses and prose meditations turn upon the theme of *The Retrea* childhood and the wisdom of innocence. From this narrow circle of great ideas he has neither the power r

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the wish to escape. He seems to be one who, having had one great imaginative moment, spends the rest of his life meditating upon it.

The common notion that Puritans were distinguished by distrust of the arts is not supported by the history of 17th century poetry. The Anglicans Herbert and Vaughan distrusted poetry so far that they tried to make it the vehicle of religion, it was the Puritan Marvell who first clearly realized that "the Muse might be respectable without going to Church". This discovery, which is implied in the poem 'The Coronet', saved him from the qualms of conscience that assailed Donne, Herrick and Vaughan. Endowed by nature with an unusual sensibility to beauty in all its forms, he was able to indulge it with an untroubled mind. He could write in the 'Metaphysical' style of Donne without imitating his brutality, and he attained something of Herrick's 'witty delicacy' without his affectation. Donne only succeeded when he was grave, Herrick when he was gay, but Marvell could write well in any mood. 'To His Coy Mistress', for instance, begins in playful banter but ends in tragic fury. His nature poetry is interesting not only for its Wordsworthian mood of introspection, but also for his avowed preference for the wilder aspects of nature.

LATER **CAVALIER POETS**

So much was John Dryden a man of letters that hardly any literary subject was alien from his pen, impelled as it was by a continual pressure of thought. Thus, throughout his life his judgement steadily improved, while to the end there was no loss of power. His first poetic work of note was the *Heroick Stanzas* written upon the death of Cromwell. Though neither this poem nor *Astrea Redux,* with which he greeted the return of Charles II, was quite free from conceits, both had a promise of vigour partly realized in *Annus Mrabilis.* Here the heroic quatrain popularized by Davenant is employed. His first satire was *Absalom and*

Achitophel written on Monmouth and Shaftesbury, which shows a mastery of the heroic couplet. In a political satire Juvenalian moral indignation is out of place. In its place Dryden put a lofty scorn which was far more biting. Dryden shows no weakness of mercy to the individual but lifts his theme above the plane of personalities and presents the person as a type of the evil embodied in him. In *The Medal* he resumed the attack of Shaftesbury in a sterner mood, and a stupid reply from Shadwell occasioned the writing of *MacFlecknoe.* The poem gave the hint for Pope's *Dunciad,* but unlike his successor Dryden did not allow his contempt to degenerate into spite.

In an age of theological controversy Dryden could hardly ignore the strife. A Tory in sentiment, he disliked the multiplicity of sects. His religious views find voice in *Religio Laid* which is an imitation of Horace's *Epistles.* It was a strong defence of the Church of England but it was unfortunate that this was immediately followed by Dryden's conversion to Catholicism. Dryden justified this change in The *Hind and the Panther.* In this allegory the Christian Churches are represented by different beasts. The work is irregular and digressive, and handles a controversy in which the author was no expert, but the satiric parts show the master's hand.

Dryden's lyrics were mostly written to be sung. His odes, though not quite free from false ornament or a touch of banality, have a sonorous splendour which secures them a lasting popularity. They make no attempt to take their imagery from the phenomena of nature.

Towards the end of his career Dryden, in translations, found subjects which suited his talents. His translations of Chaucer, Juvenal and Ovid are noteworthy. However his version of Aeneid is coarse and reckless.

Edmund Walter has attained fame as the author of "Go, lovely Rose" and "On a Girdle". He wrote many love-verses to

Lady Dorothy Sidney but they are conspicuously insincere. His other poems are of little account, except the didactic verses of his old age.

Sir William Davenant's main claim to fame is bound up with the history of the English stage. His chief poetic work is *Gondibert,* which is of no great merit.

Samuel Butler had a bitter, scornful character and was full of hard commonsense. His views were mainly negative; he hated the Puritans and his satirical power was great. The idea of Hudibras was taken from Don Quixote and his aim was solely to satirize the Roundheads. His characters are types with little real life in them.

Abraham Cowley stood between two ages. His conceits, his 'Metaphysical' subtleties, his dialectic pedantries, belong to a decadence, while as a man of science and polish-he heralded an age of reason and prose. (He was also the inventor of the Irregular Ode)

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY PROSE

ilton, Sir Thomas Browne and Jeremy Taylor, with whose works the great old prose came to a magnificent end, were preceded by a number of writers who, in form and style, have close affinities to the essayists, journalists and even novelists of a later era.

Character-Writers

BiSHOP HALL

3ishop Joseph Hall was responsible for initiating several literary genres in English - He was the first to publish epistles in English, the beginner of the mode of character-writing, the introducer of Juvenalian Satire. Books of 'Characters' became popular in the 17th century, and verse, in the manner of Hall, modelled on Theophrastus. 'Characters' were short, pointed prose pieces, less discursive than the essay, which gave detailed descriptions of the appearance and behaviour of a class or type. Hall's Juvenalian satire is titled *Virgidemiarum.* Hall's prose resembles Bacon's aphoristic style, but in place of

detached thoughts and abrupt transitions there is an orderly sequence, if nothing to compare with Bacon's flashes of insight and radiating wisdom. His book of characters is titled *Characters of Virtues and Vices.*

SIR **THOMAS OVERBURY**

Less academic, not less pungent and far more homely in flavour are the characters of Overbury. His character, unlike that of Hall, are not limited to the moral or immoral type. The types include 'A Roaring Boy, 'A Puny Clerk', 'A Mere Scholar' and few are as benign as the portrait of a milkmaid, referred to by Walton in his *Compleat Angler.* Earle responded to their harsh and anti-scholastic tone in his own *Microcosmographic.*

EARLE, BRETON, CLEVELAND AND BUTLER

There were numerous books of characters after Hall and Overbury. In the philosophic manner of Hall were the portraits by John Earle in *Microcosmographic.* Nicholas Breton, in the dedication to Bacon of his *Characters upon Essays, Moral and Divine,* had the critical insight to point out that character-writing was but an imitation or development of what Bacon had done in the Essays, and in a second book, The Good and the *Bad,* described the "worthies and unworthies of this age" in a conceited style as affected as that of Euphues.

In the strife of the King and the Parliament the character-essay became polemical, as in the hands of John Cleveland, and more so, in those of Samuel Butler.

Essayists

Owen Feltham's *Resolves,* written with Bacon as the model, contains moral reflections of not very striking

order. Ben Jonson's *Timber, or Discoveries made upon Men and Matter* contain adaptations of ideas taken from some well-known authority, especially the later classical authors.

With the essay may also be mentioned such a miscellany as John Selden's *Table Talk,* collected after Selden's death. The disconnected utterances in this work are notable for the learning, the breadth of mind and gravity of the author.

ROBERT BURTON

Burton, in his *Anatomy of Melancholy* gave the world as rich and varied an accumulation of learning, thought, humour and eccentric fancy as perhaps all the rest of those just considered put together. The book is the man himself who led a silent, solitary private life. The work is a methodical array of divisions and subdivisions. The introductory "Democritus Junior to the Reader" depicts Burton's ideas of a world purged of melancholy, an Utopian state monarchical in form. It then goes on to describe diseases in general, melancholy being one of them. Then he analyses melancholy itself-its kinds, causes, symptoms and cure. \

The universality of Burton's mind is exhibited not solety in the wealth of quotations, but in his knowledge of men and their inner and outer life. Nothing human was without interest to him. He is psychologist, satirist and humorist, equal to the character-writers in portraying the mind, but far beyond them as a meditative philosopher.

MILTON

Milton's literary life falls into 3 periods: the period of his early poems, the years of puritan rule devoted to

political controversy and service of the state, and finally the last phase of *Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes.* Milton's prose works in the main belong to the middle period and were nearly all written in the heat of contention. Except *Areopagitica* few of these prose works are read now, and if at all they are read, they are read for historical rather than literary reasons. For of all the writers who continued to use the cumbersome furniture of Latin prose, Milton was the most uncompromising. *Areopagitica* (1644), his plea for the liberty of press, is written in a style of restrained and sustained eloquence, with very few of his

characteristic faults of manner and taste. This address to the Long Parliament, named after an oration of Isocrates, contended on the broad principles of the sanctity of truth and the high mission and responsibilities of authorship.

SIR THOMAS BROWNE

Browne's major works include his spiritual autobiography *Religio Medici, Vulgar Errors* and *Urn- Burial.* Browne's works reveal him as one of the widely learned of those days - a learning which fed his imagination with the rich curious felicities of metaphor and illustration that adorn his style. Though a Royalist by conviction he took no part in the public controversies of his time, preferring the life of the quiet, professional man. His learning as well as literary output was coloured throughout by his mental attitude of a meditative philosopher and mystic.

His most characteristic work *Religio Medici* is a great essay in mystical theology. Here the author adopts the method of self-analysis, touching upon every aspect of the inner life, expressing thoughts with the utmost originality and psychological insight.

The (Laerhrs-rn *of Browne's style is different from that of Hooker, Milton and Taylor. In their writings it* is the Latinized syntax that gives complexity. Browne's syntax is far less complex. The quick transitions of his thought, the darting gleams of his keen intellect, produce a terseness, clearness and harmony with thought, which makes the language very alive. But his vocabulary is heavily, even artificially, Latinized.

The **Divines JEREMY TAYLOR**

Jeremy Taylor was an inspired preacher, a devotional writer and a moral instructor of extraordinary fervour and persuasiveness. His major works are *A Discourse of the Liberty of Prophesying, The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living, The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying,* etc. Apart from grace and clarity, his style is

characterized by wit, a tender and compassionate insight into human weaknesses and the wealth of forcible illustration. His theology is as ingenious and unphilosophical as that of his contemporaries.

Taylor's language is as loosely knit as his reasoning, but it is always clear and free from any obstacle for the modern reader except for the pedantic terms and quotations from Latin and Greek in which the preacher of those days paraded his learning. There was as much of the poet as of the orator in the emotional character of his style.

THOMAS FULLER

Thomas Fuller had the wide scholarship and character of Taylor but was far from approaching the genius of him. Fuller's learning was marked by the same zest for the quaint and the far-fetched as his style. His works include The History of the Holy War (Crusades), Good Thoughts in Bad Times, The Worthies of England, etc. Fuller's style is characterized by his propensity for mixing jests with seriousness, giving a quaint or unexpected turn to his sentences and seasoning the gravest discourse with puns and word-play.

IZAAK **WALTON**

Author of *The Compleat Angler* and *Lives* of Donne, Walton, Hooker, Herbert and Dr. Robert Sanderson, had a niche in literary history by reason of the kindliness and simplicity of his personal character which shine brightly in his writings. *The Compleat Angler* is written in a simple, mellifluous style that breathes the spirit of charity and gentleness. In the *Lives,* Walton attains often a noble eloquence, and his affection for his subjects does not prevent him from being an acute analyst of his souls.

Historians, Writers of Memoirs, etc.

Lord Herbert of Cherbury is noted for his Latin treatise *De Veritate* which is a study of. the relations of knowledge and reality. Lord Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion* is written in a vivid narrative style.and relates, as a profound lesson to future statesmen, the whole course of the struggle between crown and parliament, the mistakes that were made, the motives underlyingthem, and the personal forces arrayed on either side. Another writer of note was James Howell.

CHAPTER TWELVE RESTORATION COMEDY

With the re-establishment of monarchy in England, in 1660, the theatres were reopened and there was an upsurge of dramatic activity. One of the characteristic genres of the period was Restoration comedy, the high point of the comedy of manners. Its predominant tone was witty, cynical and amoral. The plays were mainly in prose, with passages of verse for the most romantic moments; the plots were complex, characterized by intrigues, and were usually double or even triple.

Wit and sparkle, repartee, and discussions of marital behaviour provide much of the interest, reflecting the fashionable manners of the day. Standard characters include fops, bawds, country squires and promiscuous widows. Respectable citizens avoided the theatres, which they saw as a source of corruption, and the playwrights came under heavy attack for frivolity, blasphemy and immorality, by such critics as Jeremy Collier.

JOHN DRYDEN: Dryden's major plays include-comedies: *The Wild Gallant, Secret Love, The Assignation, or Love in a Nunnery,* etc, tragi-comedies: *The Rival Ladies, The Spanish Fryer, Love Triumphant,* tragedies: The *Indian Emperor, Tyrannick Love, or Royal Martyr, The Conquest of Granada, Aurangezebe, All of Love or the World Well Lost* etc. He also made a new version of *Troilus and Cressida.*

Except *All for Love,* Dryden's plays are no true part of his mind, and he knew it. His statement that he had written no others to please himself hits the lack of sincerity of these plays, which is the worst of their many faults. Dryden wrote down to a debauched and frivolous audience, which looked in tragedy, not for human action or genuine passion, but for the rhetorical discussion of politics and love; while in comedy, no imbroglio could satisfy it unless covered with the slime of indecency.

The tragedies have many speeches of powerful rhetoric. Another strong point in them is the construction of the plot. The actions, however, are often monstrous and revolting and the events are improbable in themselves. In Shakespeare's world of imagination, these improbabilities are at home, but in Dryden's works imagination is supplanted by reason, with the result that the events and their settings are hopelessly at variance.

WILLIAM WYCHERLEY: Wycherley's major plays are *Love in a Wood, The Gentleman Dancing - Master, The Country Wife* and

The Plain Dealer. Wycherley must not be classed with Etherege and Sidley as a mere depicter of the merry life of the time without comment or criticism. In The *Country Wife,* for instance, there are sardonic comparisons and a moral standard, that various actions and ideas are held up for reprobation or contempt. In The *Plain Dealer* these traits are accentuated with an energy almost fierce in its intensity. It may however be said of Wycherley that he portrays too warmly the vice that he castigates. Though not brilliant and refined as Etherege's polished dialogue, the speech of his characters is direct, terse and far more life-like. Wycherley's satire is of characters rather than abstractions. He had a keen sense of characterization as well.

THOMAS OTWAY: Otway appears to have been weak, affectionate, impulsive and utterly lacking in moral courage. His life was embittered by an unrequited passion for the tragedienne Mrs. Barry, his letters to whom show a great depth of feeling. His plays include *The Orphan, The Atheist and Venice Preserv'd,* of which the last is his masterpiece. His plays are full of tenderness. In expression he is simple, terse and almost without ornament.

NANTHANIEL LEE: Lee was of a wild, impetuous nature with an underlying strain of madness. His plays are typically heroic, written for the stage, and full of show and rhetoric. The extravagance of metaphor in many of his speeches often passes the bounds of sense and reason. Nevertheless, that his plays were immensely effective on the stage is amply proven by theatrical history.

MRS. APHRA BEHN: Mrs. Behn's plays include *The Rover, Sir Patient-Fancy, The City Heiress,* etc - all comedies. Her novels are The *Fair Jilt, Oroonoko, The History of The Nun,* etc. She had also

written poetry and translations from French. Mrs. Behn was the first professional woman writer in England. Her comedies have acquired a reputation for gross indelicacy, but are no worse in that respect than the drama of her contemporaries. Her novels have always been more popular than her plays. Her masterpiece is *Oroonoko or The Royal Slave.* Much of her work is marred by the haste with which she wrote.

WILLIAM CONGREVE: Congreve's major comedies are *The Old Bachelor, The Double Dealer, Love for Love,* and The *Way of the World.* He also wrote one tragedy - The *Mourning Bride.*

In 1698 Jeremy Collier published his *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage.* Congreve felt the blow deeply. (His answer, *Amendments of Mr. Collier's False and Imperfect Citations,* contains much excellent reasoning against Collier's petulance) Collier attacked Dryden, Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh, D'Urfey and Otway, complaining particularly of indecency in stage dialogue and mockery of the clergy. The work created a great impact, Congreve and D'Urfey were prosecuted and Betterton and Mrs. Bracegirdle (actors) were fined. Although Restoration Comedy continued to flourish in the works of Congreve, Vanbrugh and Farquhar, its days were numbered.

Congreve was a dramatist of genius. In his plays there are many passages of deep feeling; th< action never drags, the speeches are full of life. *The Way of the World* glitters with a frozen brilliance It was the fault of Congreve's age perhaps that he could not break from the restrictions of artificia

comedy into broader scenes of life and a wider outlook which we can see in Vanbrugh, inferior as he is in wit and technique. However Congreve was, without doubt, the wittiest of Restoration playwrights.

SIR **JOHN VANBRUGH:** Vanbrugh's comedies are characterized by a breadth of humour and a raciness of treatment. *The Relapse, or Virtue in Danger, The Provok'd Wife, The Confederacy* etc. are his major works. Vanbrugh had a vigour, an audacity and often a dashing disregard for probability which carried him triumphantly through situations that in another writer might well provoke censure. Though in *The Relapse* the dramatist is extremely careless of technique, it still is a masterly comedy.

GEORGE FARQUHAR: Farquhar was extraordinarily diffident and this may have greatly obscured his natural talents. His comedies - *Love in a Bottle, The Constant Couple,* etc - show recklessness and easy morals, tempered with careless good nature. Unlike other Restoration dramatists, he occasionally had a conscience and decorum.

GEORGE ETHEREGE: Etherege's witty, licentious comedies include *The Comical Revenge; or, Love in a Tub* (1664) and *She Wou'd If She Cou'd* (1668). These set the tone of the Restoration comedy of manners that Congreve was to continue. His last play, *The*

Man of Mode (1676), is famous for its creation of the great fop, Sir Fopling Flutter.

THOMAS SHADWELL: Shadwell's plays, written in the tradition of Jonson's comedy of humours, are distinguished for their realistic pictures of London life and for their frank and witty dialogue. They include *The Sullen Lovers* (1668), *Epsom Wells* (1672), and *The Squire of Alsatia* (1688). His devotion to Jonson instigated his feud with Dryden, whom he succeeded as poet laureate in 1689. Shadwell attacked Dryden in *The Medal of John Bayes* (1682) and was himself lampooned in Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel and Mac Flecknoe.*

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

I
THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN PROSE (Late 17™ Century)

Transition
al Prose ABRAHAM COWLEY

Cowley's prose, like his poetry, was occasionally artificial, but on the whole it had a simplicity and directness, and expresses the wit, urbanity and knowledge of a true lover of letters. His major

prose works are *Proposition for the Advancement of Learning, A Vision Concerning Cromwell the Wicked and Essays.* The essays include 'Of Liberty', 'Of Solitude', 'The Dangers of an Honest Man in Much Company', 'The Shortness of Life and The Uncertainty of Riches', and 'Of Myself.

THOMAS HOBBES

As a philosopher Hobbes resembles Bacon in the practical or utilitarian importance he attaches to knowledge. But he does not share Bacon's enthusiasm for the inductive method; he regards science as essentially deductive. Hobbes attached great importance to the definition of the meaning of terms. But he does not deny the reality of the common element entitling things to the same name. The basis of all knowledge, according to him, is sensation. Man is essentially a selfish unit. Upon this theory Hobbes bases the political philosophy expounded in works like *Elements of Law and Leviathan.* This brought him into disfavour on both political and religious grounds, and the royalists regarded *Leviathan* as designed to induce Cromwell to take the crown. Hobbes's style is lucid, forceful and original. He was the master of the sententious phrase and a compact style which was however not very graceful.

Diarists,

Memoir-writers, etc SAMUEL PEPYS

Two of the most remarkable diaries ever penned, by a* strange coincidence, were in progress simultaneously at this time, written by men in close relations with each other, neither of whom was aware that his friend was keeping a record of the same events from a different point of view. Samuel Pepys was the son of a London tailor who rose to be a high official in the Navy.

Pepys began his Diary on January 1, 1660, and continued it till May 31, 1669. Whether we consider it as a historical document or a human record, its value is priceless. Pepys's method can be best defined as the absence of method. The relative importance of the events narrated is to be measured by their interest to Pepys, and the reader is quickly absorbed by the man's personality, and soon comes to look at everything from his point of view. All the petty concerns of his daily existence, his own or his wife's health, work at the office, the steady growth of his savings, the affairs of his friends, relations, and patrons, events in the political world and at court, the Plague, the Fire, the Dutch war, the state of the King's ships, all these things are set down side by side with Pepys's anxieties, jealousies, amours, reflections, repentances-in short, everything that was going on without or within which claimed his

attention. Pepys had gained immensely in worldly experience in the course of these *9Vi* years, but the style is unstudied, easy-going and perfectly natural throughout.

JOHN EVELYN

John Evelyn was an older man, and very different in position and character from his friend Pepys. He was a person of wealth and family, a scholar of wide interests, and a voluminous writer on various subjects. The Diary covers the greater part of Evelyn's life, and is a grave and dignified autobiography such as would be expected from a learned and accomplished gentleman. It has none of the gossipy charm of Pepys.

Other memoir-writers and diarists were Anthony Hamilton, Bishop Burnet, etc.

DRYDEN

Dryden's work in prose consists in the main of the prefaces that he wrote to nearly all his plays and to some other works. These prefaces were more or less independent and like the *Essay Of Dramatick Poesie,* written in reply to Sir Robert Howard's preface to *Four New Plays,* were general statements of Dryden's literary theories. Howard had questioned the propriety of using the rhymed couplet in dramatic verse. Dryden defends the usage, both here and in the *Essay of Heroick Plays,* prefixed to *The Conquest of Granada* on the ground that heroic verse (10 syllabled line in rhyming couplets) is naturally suited to the elevated and artificial diction of the heroic play. Howard wrote a rejoinder, and Dryden closed the debate with *A Defence of an Essay of Dramatick Poesie.*

Of Dramatick Poesie is in the form of a dialogue between Eugenius (Sackville), Crites (Sir Robert Howard), Lisideius (Sedley), and Neander (Dryden), who take a boat on the Thames on the day of the battle between the Dutch and English navies in

1665 and subsequently discuss the comparative merits of English and French drama, and of the old and new in English drama. The essay is largely concerned with justifying Dryden's current practice as a playwright. He showed independence in his criticism of other dramatists, Ben Jonson and even Shakespeare coming in for severe censure of their irregularities. However he recognizes their merits and says "I admire him (Jonson) but I love Shakespeare".

Dryden described his style as derived from the refined conversation of the court of Charles II. (But his prose is real prose, and not merely a superior kind of talk.) Dryden clearly realized that the office of prose was precise statement and logical exposition, demonstration and reasoning; that it must have regularity and balance, though it should avoid stiffness and monotony by approximating to the easy flow of intellectual conversation. He accordingly secured clearness and precision, not by means of a complicated structure but by the intellectual rhythm of point and antithesis, which however, does not call attention to itself, as in the euphuistic style. Dryden's prose is generally characterized by an epigrammatic force and brilliance. He is at his most incisive at such sarcastic pieces as the introduction to *Absalom and Achitophel,* his Epistle to the Whigs prefixed to The Medal, and The Vindication of the Duke of Guise.

JOHN BUNYAN

John Bunyan was a tinker who, in his youth, served in the Civil War under Samuel Luke, the original of Butler's Sir Hudibras. He, after reading The *Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven* and *The Practice of Piety,* underwent that deep emotional experience of sin, despair and repentance which he describes so powerfully in *Grace Abounding.* Drawn to a fresh and more earnest study of the Bible, he renounced the vice and ungodliness in which he states that he had been a ring leader, and joined a Baptist

congregation at Bedford where he soon became a preacher himself. At the Restoration he was imprisoned and asked to give up preaching, which he refused. In prison he produced nine books including *Grace Abounding.*

Bunyan's personality is revealed to us in *Grace Abounding,* his spiritual autobiography. Bunyan's nature was profoundly emotional. When he realized his sinfulness and its consequences he was overwhelmed with remorse and terror. He thought he might at any moment be the object of the vengeance of God. The agonizing struggle of his soul is described, figuratively, in Christian's passage through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Bunyan's theology was simple, destining the saved to eternal happiness and the .unrepentant to everlasting doom. He saw mankind living with this tremendous alternative hanging over their heads, and was driven by pity and terror to awaken them to a sense of danger, like a man giving the alarm to a slumbering city that a murderous foe is at the gate. Intense passion, moral earnestness,'and an imagination that saw the felfcities and the horrors of the next world in all the actuality of the present, combined with an innate eloquence, were the gifts that drew multitudes to the church at Bedford, and made The *Pilgrim's Progress* the most moving religious book in the English language.

Bunyan has 4 major works to his credit-Grace *Abounding, The Pilgrim's Progress, The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* and *The Holy War.* If The *Pilgrim's Progress* is an allegory on a repentant soul's journey to salvation, Mr. Badman is the biography of a sinner whose destination is hell. The story, narrated by Mr. Wiseman, is about how a selfish, unprincipled person, Mr. Badman, who yields to every appetite, lives an impenitent life, and dies peacefully, unawakened. The reader's sense of justice and repulsion is more surely satisfied than if Mr. Badman had been overwhelmed by material calamity. In The *Holy War* the city of Mansoul has 5 gates - Eargate, Eyegate,

Mouthgate, Nosegate and Feelgate-which cannot be forced without the

consent of those within. Among the characters within and without the city are a vast array of allegorical personages. There is no room here for the picturing of real life which saved the other 2 stories from ever becoming vague or shadowy.

Given Bunyan's natural genius, his intense sensibility, almost fanatical fervour, and an imagination expressing itself instinctively in the concrete, one would wonder how an uneducated man should fashion for himself such a fine style. His education was probably the best that could have been prescribed for him. He was brought up among the people for whom he wrote; he spoke and wrote their rich vernacular. His eloquence and language were enriched and chastened by his reading of the Bible and other theological literature.

Later Essayists

SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE'S works consists of various political and historical essays, his diplomatic correspondence, and Miscellania which comprise the strictly more literary portion of his writings. He had style rather than depth or originality. Swift and Jbhnson eulogized Temple's style, with some injustice to Cowley, Dryden and the other writers of the age who had performed their share in adapting prose to the requirements of an age that was logical, matter-of-fact and altogether less prone to enthusiasm and imagination than that which preceded it. However, Temple's style did indeed have the refined charm of well-balanced and flowing sentences, and his finer essays came very near the well-bred elegance and polished ease that later characterized the work of Addison and Steele.

JOHN LOCKE was perhaps the first English philosopher to investigate the bases of thought, by an inquiry into the nature of the mind and of its relations to the objects of knowledge. This he did in *An Essay Concernin_ Human Understanding.*

Conclusion

The close of the 17th century was a period contrasting in almost every way with the Elizabethan time. It was a prosaic age succeeding the greatest outburst of imagination the English race had ever known. Scientific curiosity, philosophic analysis, and reflection on men and manners, had taken the place of poetic creativity and lyrical exuberance. Prose itself was now completely emancipated from the spell of poetry and was no longer an amphibious language. In a sense it was the birth time of English prose. And now that prose- writers had ceased to ape the poets, poetry on the other hand was becoming prosaic.

The end of the century is, however, no real landmark in literary history. This was the eve of the Augustan age, in which the tendencies towards greater correctness, sobriety, precision and elegance instead of beauty were to culminate. The essay was to be perfected by Addison and Steele, and controversial writing by Swift; Bentley was to carry scholarship to a higher pitch of exactness; Berkeley and Hume to proceed on the road logically opened by Hobbes and Locke. Finally, the critical spirit of the age, and its creative impulses, finding no longer a natural outlet in poetry and drama, were to produce the realistic novel.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN
POETRY OF THE 18th CENTURY

ALEXANDER POPE

Alexander Pope was indeed the most impressive figure in 18th century poetry. He was slightly deformed and of small stature. Except in his earliest years he never enjoyed health, a fact which explains, it is said, his malice and untruthfulness. His earliest work, written when he was about 17,.was *Pastorals*- the verses are imitative but occasionally show real feeling a melody which falls short only of the great masters of the shepherds' verse. Their promise, however, was unfulfilled-the spirit of the age and interactions with intellectuals led their author along other lines.

Essay on Criticism is a call to return to the ancient classical models and the critical principles of Aristotle, Longinus and Quintilian; in Pope's view, neither Shakespeare nor Milton nor even Dryden had been disciplined to those principles.

Another major poem of this period is *Rape of the Lock.* Lord Petre, having forcibly cut off a lock of Miss Arabella Fermor's hair, the incident gave rise to a quarrel between the families. With the idea of resolving the quarrel, Pope treated the subject in a playful mock-heroic poem *Rape of the Lock,* on the model of Boileau's *Le Lutrin.* He presents Belinda at her toilette, a game of ombre, the snipping of the lock while Belinda sips her coffee, the wrath of Belinda and her demand that the lock be restored, the final wafting of the lock as a new star to adorn the skies. *Rape of the Lock* remains for all time the true reflex of the social and literary grace Of a classic age, and a perfect model of delicate satire. In later years, Pope revised the poem, introduced elemental spirits like gnomes and sylphs into the narrative, thus creating a delightful parody of the classic epic.

9/s *Windsor, Forest* as a descriptive poem was suggested by Denham's *Cooper's Hill* and Wordsworth found to in it some new images of external nature. Like its original, it passes from nature to historical associations, ^q Thetpdem <as the result of a quarrel with Addison), praised the Tory Peace of Utrecht, and Pope began to find*/$* his friends among the Tories.

Pope's translation of the Iliad has enjoyed continuous popularity. Richard Berttley said of it, "A fine 9. poem, Mr. Pope, but you must not call it Homer." Later critics have said that the work lives precisely because. -i it isnot Homer. Pope never tried to acquire the simplicity and archaism of Homer: His style in the translation-vV was the natural style of the age and of his own mind. His poetic diction, his choice of words and turn of ,, phrase never seem forced or pedantic. The version of the Odyssey, made later, was hardly a success.

Pope wrote two sentimental poems, *Eloisa to Abelard* and *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady.* ¦ Both poems were long regarded as models of pathos, and the feeling in them is indeed genuine. With j these-poems appeared the *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day.* It is Pope's chief adventure in this kind, and it shows that ? his genius did not lie in the lyric but elsewhere.

Bolingbroke set Pope to write a philosophic poem, of which he supplied the material in prose fragments. The result was the four books of Essay *on Man.* Since Pope had no philosophy, and Bolingbroke was little more than a reckless amateur, the poem has little philosophic value. But it is full of humanity and many , of the passages are brilliant. Connected with *Essay on Man* are the four *Moral Essays* whose vigorous brutality,- about this time, made a conquest of Pope. These essays mark POpe's transition to Horatian satire. : r : n."r,' ¦

OTHER POETS OF THE CLASSICAL TRADITION

Among the secondary writers of the time of Queen Anne pone is more representative of the "spirit of the age" than Prior, Parnell and Gay. Prior and Gay were essentially pOets of "The Town." They were men of the world for whom the writing of poetry was a mere diversion. Their verse is predominantly "social verse" in a predominantly social age. Parnell too loved the town, and spent most of his life among the literary circles of London: ¦ Nevertheless, his poetry shows an appreciation of nature greater than that of any of his minor contemporaries.

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x- Matthew Prior-would undoubtedly have made a clever satirist, but he avoided satire, fearing that it might mate enemies. At times he attempted the .serious or semi-serious didactic verse typical of the eighteen century,-? He-had-much of Chaucer's sly humour, and even attempted imitations of the older poet. Prior's great virtue as a poet is his intense realism. He portrays life with all its noise, colour, change and crudity. -jfte *'o* Thomas Parnell bears in his poetry the marks of a period of literary transition. In his verse we find the •motfattzirag,-didactic spirit of the 18 century, expressed with a certain felicity of diction and charm of style. *Sbme*of.his poems anticipate Gray's Elegy in a Country Churchyard and the Churchyard School, and show a real Reelingjfer.natiure. Also, there is an exquisite simplicity and directness in many of his passages. *The Hermit,* rthfeibesti-knoi«n>Qfi^irneU's verses, is a moral, narrative poem, • " '•

John Gay wrote several poems and ptays of which The *Beggar's Opera* is the most significant. Like the other writers of the day, Gay sought in literature an aid to political arid social success. His early poem *Rural Sports* shows some feeling for natural scenery, and is thought to have partly inspired Gray's Elegy. It was Pope

who set Gay in the task of writing The *Shepherd's Week,* Gay began the work In the style of burlesque, but
soon deviated into serious effort, the result being a series of witty pictures of the country. The influence of
Virgil and Spencer as masters of the ecpjup is seen in.Gay's work..
The 18th century, dominated as it was by
Virgil and the classics, was pre-eminently fond of pastoral verse. Gay*s is notable as a first attempt at realistic
pastoral at a time when the artificial pastoral of
Pope and his followers was in fashion.
barn >o !¦.¦'> in the mock-epic poem, "The Fan„" where an everyday accessory of high society dress, the currently
*> fasHidnable lady's fan, is described in ap elevated, manner, Gay dealt witfrthat artificial world which Pope
-^rtrayed.in "The Rape of the Lock,,," but.in "Trivia," hay"deliberately those- London as the inspiration of his
^%8rif? -The poem is a vivid and. interesting, description of "The Town" in his day. The influence of "The Town"
'"^'cOmhined with his earlier love of .country verse to produce a pumper of *ToWn Eclogues* whose spirit is that of
Trivia. """" * """*' *''*'• ^
b ^5K.: it was as a playwright that Gay reached complete, success*? in '1728', *Mi Beggar's Opera* appeared. r- Hefe he attacked the Government of Walpole, aad at the same time fidlduted the'poputar Italian opera, which Addison had already burlesqued in *Rosamond.* The sequel *Polty was* prohibitecl upon public stage. ; :o.tea4
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OLIVER GOLDSMITH •• ., . ,"' ' ' .~'"\'. '" /" '" ""^
'V '•>'• ' " '•¦¦!'¦>">

¡'• • " Goldsmith's first great poem was The *Traveller.* Opposed as he imaginedhimself to be to all romantic 9-1'"tendencies in poetry, he nevertheless reveals iahjjs.poem, as later in The *Deserted Village,* a touch of the to "sen^imentatity wbicrrmarked the second half of the 18th century. In this poem, anticipating Byron, he paints

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himself as a 'solitary, disillusioned figure like Childe Harold of a later'day. In a spirit of pensive melancholy,

the traveler tells of the countries he has visited in a vain search for Happiness, only to discover that happiness

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fsnot created by externals, but is implanted deep in man's own nature, JfL Goldsmith's

second great poem, The *Deserted Village,* was exceedingly popular. In The *Traveller* the

poet dealt with the sorrows of those forced by careless luxury to seek a relief from poverty by emigration. In

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77ie *Deserted Village,* Goldsmith elaborates the theme. He sees the village not as it really was in the days of prosperity, but transformed by the light of memory into a beauty not its own. The village and its characters are described with a sweet simplicity. Then the poet turns from the picture of the village in prosperity, and shows it in'decay.

Goldsmith has also written some light, society verses. *Edwin and Angelina* is an attempt at the ballad style of poetry which Bishop Percy's *Reliques* was then making popular. Of Goldsmith's songs, the best-known is the one fn *the Vicar of Wakefield:*

When lovely woman stoops to folly
And finds too late that men betray
What charm can soothe her melancholy
What art can wash her guilt away? *.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

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JOURNALISM AND THE ESSAY (18th Century)

The essay (meaning, according to Montaigne, 'an attempt') originated as a repository of casual ideas on men and matters. To Montaigne it was more a means of thinking aloud, than a literary type. In England it was cultivated by Bacon and the humanists. But as literature became more formalized and academic in the

latter half of the 17th century, its practice gradually passed out of fashion. Later, a combination of circumstances peculiar to England gave a group of humanists the "opportunity of creating it anew. Their work appeared in a detached, fragmentary form like the essays of Montaigne, Bacon or Cowley. But in method and scope it was an achievement of marked originality, and exercised a profound influence of the prose style, and indeed on the civilization of their epoch.

In origin, the 18th century Addisonian essay had little in common with the Renaissance essay, but belongs to the history of the daily press. Since the beginning of the Civil War, England had been the home of diurnals and news-sheets. But, thanks to the Licensing Act of 1662, the 17th century produced no serious attempts at journalism. From the time of William's accession, news-sheets and Mercuries began to multiply. In 1690 John Dunton hit on the ingenious idea of publishing the *Athenian Gazette,* afterwards changed to the *Athenian Mercury,* a periodical to answer questions; in 1702 the *Daily Courant* began its long Career till 1735; and in 1704, Daniel Defoe started the publication of *The Review.*

DANIEL DEFOE

As a pamphleteer Defoe showed great grasp of details and an intuitive foreknowledge of events that characterize great journalists and social writers. Towards the end of the 17th century he published *An Essay Upon Projects,* proposing various social and economic improvements in England, as well as displaying an insight into the manners and morals of his contemporaries-one of the chief qualifications of an essayist. In his writings Defoe kept harking upon politics and public controversy. Though Defoe's prose is vigorous, fluent and homely, he had not cultivated the subtle persuasiveness of style without which the public does not

care to read about its own manners and mannerisms. The same is true of his *Review.* This remarkable venture into journalism is an admirable attempt to estimate the forces of international politics and to weigh the merits of commercial and ecclesiastical questions at home. But when he turned to the culture and conduct of his age, he created nothing great. The *Review* is by no means Defoe's only contribution to the progress of social journalism. Some ten years later he was to return to the investigation of city morals and manners, and was then to find highly developed organs of expression and a large appreciative public of readers.

RICHARD STEELE

Richard Steele was a playwright, tractarian and cavalry officer who plunged into journalism and produced a new literary type out of the Mercuries, reviews and gazettes. He was the first venturer to perceive that up till now political essays had been addressed to the wrong public. It was a time when the English monarchy had lost its hold on the nation. At the same time the growth of cdmmerce was giving importance to the middle class. It was an age of domesticity, and literature ceased to draw inspiration from the court. Such tendencies had created for themselves a publicity in the coffee-houses. Thanks to the Londoner's passion for club life, this new type of tavern had multiplied enormously since the Civil War. Every house had its distinctive members who respected each other's opinions and tolerated each other's eccentricities.

The man who opened the eyes of his fellow townsmen to the humours of middle class life was Richard Steele. Steele had the ordinary equipment of an educated man of the period, but contact with life on all its sides had developed in him an unfailing insight into artificiality and a generous admiration of worth. He could appreciate the trivial and serious sides of life in their correct

proportion. It was not in his ideas that his genius displayed itself, it was in the way he expressed them. When the *Tatter* first appeared (April 12, 1709) it was conceived on much the same lines as any previous periodical. A section was devoted to society news and

theatrical criticism, another to poetry, another to literature and yet another to politics, each under the article of a coffee-house.

Ever since Tudor times London had been growing fast, and the constant migration to the capital had created a new need - the need of a standard of city manners of urbanity. Steele used the periodical to supply this want, and gradually evolved a new mouthpiece of public opinion. For a long time he confined himself to destructive criticism. He protested against the impertinences of the newly constructed middle-class society and satirized swindlers, bores, chatterboxes and coxcombs. \

Gradually, Steele's satire began to penetrate more deeply. He was the first English author to discover how far virtue and happiness depend on the intimate relationships of family life. His interest in domesticity led him inevitably to the problems of married life. Steele was one of the first English authors who wrote for women; he was also one of the first who put into prose the new ideal of feminine perfection. There are moments when he looked beyond the accomplishments of social life and caught glimpses of the morbid tendencies which the restraints of civilization sometimes aggravate. One can remember in this regard his studies of 'inferiority complex', megalomania and envy. As was to be expected of a humanist, Tatler discovered some of the purest gems of human nature hidden in obscure lives.

JOSEPH ADDISON

Joseph Addison was the presiding genius of the *Spectator* (March 1, 1711 to Dec 6, 1712). Steele had succeeded in discovering the range and scope of the periodical essay, but Addison realized its artistic possibilities. He knew that it should become a stylized type of literature, and he set himself to a single theme and to deal with familiar things. At the same time the essay must have the charm of novelty. Addison was fully

aware of these problems. In the *Spectator* he excluded politics, religious controversy and pedantry, but he embraced every topic of literary, social or moral interest. He adapted and applied universal wisdom to shed light on questions of current interest, and he peopled his pages with types and characters to illustrate his pronouncements. Unlike the *Tatler,* he dwelt more insistently on the moral purpose of his paper; and each issue of the *Spectator* contained a single thought, every creation distinct from its neighbour, though all bearing a strong family likeness. But it is in the tone and attitude of the *Spectator* that its originality and merit will be found. If it staged the familiar scenes of city life, it showed them the scenes from the viewpoint of a humanist. The new periodical shut its eyes to all distinctions except that of vice and virtue, and employed no criterion but that of common sense.

The Spectator purported to be conducted by a small club, including Sir Roger de Coverley, who represents the country gentry, Sir Andrew Freeport, Captain Sentry, and Will Honeycomb, representing respectively commerce, the army and the town. Mr. Spectator himself, who writes the papers, is a man of travel and learning, who frequents London as an observer, but keeps clear of political strife. The obpct of the papers was 'to enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality'.

Addison taught his age restraint, good manners, good sense, forbearance and mutual esteem. He pointed out that drama was decaying under the influence of French scenery and stage effects. He recalled literary men to the spirit and simplicity of old ballads, and social thinkers to the rising importance of commerce. He encouraged self-culture by contending that English readers could find in *Paradise Lost* as high a standard of excellence as was consecrated by the Iliad and the Aeneid.

Addison's Satire

Unlike Dryden, Pope and the *Tatler* in its earlier numbers, Addison never satirized persons, but ridiculed customs and prejudices. His method was to collect as many examples as possible of some prevailing absurdity, gravely crowd them all into one illustration and then leave the reader to laugh at the incongruous result. In this way he ridiculed the staging of the opera, headdresses which make the wearers hideous, men who fill their letters with French military terms, and a number of other issues. Never has more wit and accurate knowledge with less venom been employed on the censure of folly.

Addison and Steele: a comparison

Steele did not have Addison's gift of drawing a moral, or his scholarly knowledge of current topics, or] his polished style. But Steele had the playwright's eye for situations and for the interplay of characters. He had by nature a surer gift of reading the human heart, and by experience a keener insight into city life. Steele went deeper when he discussed education and insisted that the true place where young people are made or marred is home. He gave the middle class their standard of good manners and warned them of the darkei vices of city life.

OTHER PERIODICALS

Both *Tatler* and *Spectator* provoked many rivals and enemies. Some of them were *Female Tatler, Th Inquisitor, Free Thinker, Plain Dealer, Medley* and *Rambler* (the last by Dr.Johnson).

JONATHAN **SWIFT**

Of the papers that were most influenced by the new journalism, the most important was *The Examiner.* Swift found that he had much in common with both Addison and Steele, and with something of their spirit but with more power he attacked imposters in the person of John Partridge. His immortal pamphlet *Predictions for the year 1708,* made famous the name of Issac Bickerstaff, which Steele was glad to adopt in the *Tatler,* as a symbol of good sense and sincerity. Swift made several suggestions for the *Tatler,* and contributed at least 5 papers; but soon his mood became too saturnine (gloomy) and savage for the witty and humane creation of his two friends. Swift's almost inhuman indictment of life could find expression only in books and pamphlets which compromise nobody but the author. 20th century criticism has stressed Swift's sanity, vigour and satirical inventiveness rather than his alleged misanthropy.

THE GUARDIAN

After the *Spectator* ceased publication, both Addison and Steele busied themselves with the stage, but neither could throw off the habit of social journalism. In 1713 Steele brought out *The Guardian* to deal with society, and detail the privacies of life and character. Later Addison joined in. The Chief interest of the Guardian will be found in the renewed interest it created in the art of essay writing. But very few contributors survived the tide of time for the reason that they were put off by the apparent informality of the work. An art which sets the writer off into self-revelation requires from him a certain temperament. Because it enters so many houses and coffee-houses so frequently, it must have something common to all its readers. It must be tolerant, universal, reactionary, free from anything sectarian, polemic, controversial. Hence some of the talents which produced brilliant pamphlets spelt sheer disqualification for essay-writing. Pope, for

instance, contributed to the Guardian-his subtle wit and graceful colloquial style are undeniable, but his thoughts were charged with too much venom. Of the other contributors, George Berkeley is perhaps most significant.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN SATIRE (18th Century)

The essence of satire is the power to mix jest and earnest. It falls into 2 main classes. In Horatian satire the speaker manifests the character of an urbane, witty, tolerant man of the world who is moved more often to wry amusement than to indignation at the spectacle of human folly, pretentiousness and hypocrisy. The writers of such satire, like Horace, often have themselves in view and use a relaxed informal style without rhetoric or poetry to evoke from the readers a wry smile at human failings and absurdities. The other class, of which Juvenal is the type, deals less directly with the personality of the writer, bases its style upon poetry, and finds in rhetoric the enforcement of its themes. The Juvenalian satirist undertakes to evoke from readers contempt, moral indignation or an unillusioned sadness at the aberrations of humanity. The style of Juvenal follows the epic flow of Virgil. It fits in with a sombre, less spiteful view of life. The sinner is less prominent than the sin. To a great extent Pope imitated Horace and Johnson imitated Juvenal.

ALEXANDER **POPE**

Pope's adaptation of Horace enabled him to defend himself and assail his enemies. The *Dunciad* is a ferocious attack upon numerous small personages who had provoked Pope's anger. In its first form the hero was Lewis Theobald, the first great textual

critic of Shakespeare. Afterwards Colley Cibber, a skilful actor and capable dramatist, took his place. His remaining satires are titled *Imitations of Horace.* The prologue to them, titled *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot,* or "Defence of his Satire," is one of Pope's most brilliant pieces of irony and invective, mingled with autobiography. It contains the famous attacks on Addison, Halifax, Harvey and others. The poem is Pope's final protest at the decay of Britain's cultural inheritance that he believed to be associated with the Hanoverian rule of George I and Georgeil. In the final of the four major versions of *the Dunciad,* images of chaos and darkness replace those of peace-and plenty that shone so brightly in the earlier poem. These images assume an almost demonic energy, demonstrating Pope's imaginative powers at full stretch. The final, ironic paradox is that the terrible cataclysm of the engulfing darkness and abyss Pope so fears is only apparent to us because of the clarity of his poetry. The brilliance of the poetic creation, its intellectual and imaginative splendour, needs to be placed against the dissolution it records.

Pope is a master of literary craft. Confining himself almost entirely to the heroic couplet, he gave it a condensation and finish unknown to his predecessors. His epigrammatic lines are unrivalled in their picture of contemporary social life from the satirist's point of view. For his venom there is some excuse; his life, as he says, was a "long disease". Skilful as he was in hitting the weak points of his enemies, his portraits would have been more effective satire if he had made virtue a foil of vice.

Dryden's assaults on Shaftesbury gained splendour by his encomium of Shaftesbury the judge, but only in the case of Addison does Pope remember this touch of art.

JONATHAN SWIFT

Swift was one of the great masters of prose satire, and the note of irony, sometimes grave, sometimes bitter, is predominant in almost everything he wrote. In professing to plead an opponent's cause, he shattered it. We see this quality in his pamphlets and articles, in *Drapier's Letters,* and in the *Modest Proposal* in which he proposed to relieve the misery of the Irish by using their children for food; but most of all we see it in *Gulliver's Travels.* His style is perfectly adapted for this purpose in its austere simplicity and bold masculine vigour. To no other English writer, perhaps, was the English tongue so much a weapon of deadly precision.

DR. **JOHNSON**

Johnson's first satire, *London* has hardly enough sincerity to take first rank. Unlike the later The Vanity of Human Wishes," it is fairly easy to read. Johnson denounced the town, but despite its neglect of him he loved it well. He followed Juvenalian Satires, but his parallels are often unreal. In *The Vanity of Human Wishes* there is no immaturity. It is a unique example of a copy surpassing the original. It owes its success to its moral seriousness and to its weighty but well-illustrated generalizations. Juvenal's powerful rhetoric has in it a characteristic note of baseness which is at least modified in the English version. In the fine conclusion Johnson shows a Christian serenity which was very different from the Stoicism of the Roman original.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN THE RISE OF THE MODERN NOVEL (18th Century)

In the pamphlet-novels of Greene, Nashe and Dekker there was a kind of realism grafted on to either the old romantic stock or a sort of essay or moral discourse. Pure romance, meanwhile, had not entirely ceased-in fact, in the mid-17* century a revival took place through the craze for the long-winded French romances. Many translations were done from French during this period and several writers borrowed plots from them. The novelettes of **Mrs. Aphra Behn,** especially, had a touch of the heroic-romantic style. Even the incidents from actual life and her own experience are, except in the finest parts of *Oroonoko,* divested by her artificial colouring of reality. At this time some satires on Romanticism were also published in England, the best of them being The *Female Quixote* by Mrs. Lennox.

With the gradual demise of the fiction which was more than half-poetry, a new fiction was beginning which was entirely prosaic. The motive force behind the Elizabethan novel was the same impassioned imagination that generated the play, the lyric and the poetry of Spenser and Milton. When this force became spent, and the time set in when men's interest centred in the world of fact; when science busied itself with registering phenomena, and humanism with the observation of contemporary types, a new kind of fiction was bound to arise.

The most important contribution of the 17th century to the development of fiction was Bunyan's. His intense imagination and burning insight enabled him to carry out with unparalleled

success his didactic purpose to show men exactly as they are; and instead of vague allegorical figures he peopled his stories with beings of flesh and blood, painting a graphic picture of the life he saw around him.

DANIEL DEFOE: But it was Defoe who, in his fictitious histories and biographies, finally established realism as the main principle of English fiction. He is the progenitor of all the naturalists. He.was a manufacturer of printed matter for popular consumption and his lives of eminent criminals and swindlers were, meant for that class of readers who read the stories of ballad heroes like Robin Hdod, crude novels of common life like those of Thomas Deloney and still more crude versions of romances.

Defoe was equipped with a style perfectly adapted for such an audience. He derived his style from the coarse but racy speech of the common people. His single aim was to tell his story plainly, as it might have been told by Crusoe or Moll Flanders themselves. He sought neither grace nor polish, and he cared more for clarity than for grammar.

Defoe was not a man who cared much for his art, or who tried to think out a new theory of the novel. He saw his public curious for facts. He also saw that it made little difference whether the facts were genuine or the reverse. So he dressed up his facts in pretended records of travel, pseudo-histories, and pseudo- biographies which proved as attractive and profitable as honest narratives. Thus, in *Robinson Crusoe,* he wrote an account of the strange adventures which had actually befallen the Scots mariner Alexander Selkirk, filling in the picture with minute details out of his own knowledge. With the same exactitude he portrayed social types like Moll Flanders, Roxana and Colonel Jack-people with no charm of personality, but full of

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meaning to his public, because they were authentic representatives of the world they lived in. He drew these portraits in the simplest and most direct fashion, in the manner of biography. *Moll Flanders* is a picaresque novel.

Some of the works for which Defoe is best known are the following: *Robinson Crusoe, Life and Adventures of Mr. Duncan Campbell, Captain Singleton, Moll Flanders, Colonel Jack, Roxana,* etc.

Robinson Crusoe, perhaps the most popular, inspired many imitations, generally known as the 'Robinsonnades' including Philip Quarll (doubtful authorship), Peter Wilkins (by Paltock) and Swiss Family Robinson (by Johann Wyss). [In The *Rise of the Novel* Ian Watt provides one of the most controversial modern interpretations of the story of Robinson Crusoe, relating Crusoe's predicament to the rise of bourgeois individualism, division of labour, and social and spiritual alienation.]

JONATHAN SWIFT: In his works Swift boldly distorted probability using the 'device' of "willing suspension of disbelief." Wonder-stories had been told from ancient times, but it was only in the age of realism that the writer thought it necessary to authenticate his marvels with definite particulars of time and place as well as illustrate it with a wealth of detail. Swift, of

course, was not a pure romancer, but a satirist diabolically in earnest. He used minute realism in his work because he had learned the incomparable force of the impression left on the mind by facts or what seemed to be facts. His masterpiece Gulliver's Travels (to Lilliput, Brobdingnag, Laputa and to the land of the Houyhnhnms) is a satire on the people of Europe written with an artless authenticity, scepticism and superfluousness of detail.

SAMUEL RICHARDSON: Richardson was an extremely industrious printer-publisher who in 1740 laid the way for the development of the novel through his work Pamela. The novel started as a series of 'familiar letters' which fellow printers had encouraged him to write on the problems and concerns of everyday life. *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* was in particular written as an instructive illustration of the policy of being honest. It is the story of a maid servant whose virtue is perseveringly attempted by her master, Squire B. She remains unconquerable, though she is in love with him; but at the same time she manages affairs so as not to lose any advantages of the situation. Finally, her admirer finds he cannot do without her; so Pamela marries her unprincipled suitor, and becomes a fine lady. Pamela relates her tale in a journal entered up several times a day. Her gift of writing results in faithful portraits of the inmates of Squire B's household, but she herself is the best portrayed of all. The morality and realism of the work were particularly praised in its time. However complaints of its impropriety persuaded him to revise his second edition considerably. Imitations and forged 'continuations' persuaded Richardson to go on with the story, and volumes 3 and 4 were published. In that year there appeared a stinging parody called *An Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews,* which Richardson believed to be by Fielding (and it almost certainly

was) and which he never forgave. Fielding's *Joseph Andrews,* which begins as a parody of Pamela was published in 1742.

All his life Richardson had intimate friendship with several women including the Bluestocking ladies, an informal group of intelligent, learned and sociable women of the 2nd half of the 18th century. This helped him acquire his wide empirical knowledge of the heart.

Pamela was Richardson's trial piece. In it he discovered the lines on which a new kind of fiction could be written. The finished masterpiece is Clarissa. *Pamela* is not quite a novel, but *Clarissa* is definitely a mature one. In it Richardson provides no earthly reward save undying fame for his heroine and so achieves a tragedy. *Clarissa* is a creature of finer mould, who falls a victim to the indifference and hard-heartedness of relatives and the villainy of a seducer, the gorgeous Lovelace, and seals her chastity with her life. Not only did her history show forth the full capacity of the epistolary novel to transcribe real life, not only did it disclose Richardson's amazing knowledge of obscure mental states and his expertness in building up character from the inside, but it also embarks upon a new dimension of morality ih the idea of the natural purity and excellence of a woman's heart, and her ability to suffer shame without surrendering her dignity.

The realism of Richardson is different from the realism of Defoe. The point of view has shiftectfrom the visible world to the world of feeling and motive. Richardson's strength lies in the minute accuracy of the psychological narrative, which is told with the same superabundance of relevant and irrelevant detail as Defoe used in describing physical occurrences. Dr. Johnson said that a single-letter in one of Richardson's novels contains more of such knowledge than the whole of *Tom Jones.* Richardson did not evoke exceptional characters like Sterne's or Smollett's. In Clarissa it is the strength of the character not its strangeness that makes it

unique. All his creations are compounded of universal traits. In *Clarissa* and Lovelace, for instance, *fundamental* human traits are developed to an exceptional intensity by the writer's concentration on

SrabTJFor VvLHilf5 ^V0" of the modern novel, the names of Fielding and Richardson are SSS^WJtiSLW* H?fo Writing f0r the stage' caric*uring the false heroics and 3SS2L?.^f ^ succeeded Restoration comedy. His *Joseph Andrews* is the first novel in ila .r ? and тne£dr£т from life are f1tted int0 a strong ^ving the artistic unity and intellectual meaning of a fine comedy, fhe character writers had worked on the materials of a novel, Defoe had shown

the realistic method of telling a story, Richardson had applied this method to the inner life of feeling and motive - Fielding now constructed the art-form comprehending all these elements, which had not been seriously modified since.

Fielding's other novels include *Jonathan Wild, Tom Jones* and *Amelia.* In both *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones,* Fielding set forth at large his views on the proper constitution of the novel, purged of mere didacticism, but fortified with the critical temper and a tried philosophy of life. He regards the novel as a subdivision of the epic, which, like drama, may be either tragic or comic. With Joseph Andrews in mind, a string of burlesque adventures, he naturally put the novel in the comic category.

In affiliating his novel to the epic, it is clear that Fielding was thinking rather of the narrative form than the content of epic. There is a closer analogy between his typical novel *Tom Jones* and drama, not only in the new prominence of dialogue but in structure. Although very long, the novel is highly organized, and was thought by Coleridge to have one of the three great plots of all literature.

The object of Fielding's realism is not that of Defoe, to make readers believe he is recounting facts, but to convey a general impression of life. His easy command of natural dialogue gives a vitality to his characters that Defoe's never attained. He does not try to dissect like Richardson. There are no emotional crises in his novels. Fielding held that 'invention' and 'judgement' are essential to a novelist. By this he meant that the novelist should be able to discover or penetrate into the true essence of things. He also must aviod incredible things, however well-attested.

In this dependence on objective truth, the novel, in Fielding's theory if not in practice, is seen departing from its old kinship with poetry, and coming into a closer relationship with science. He varied from the poets also in giving an intellectual interpretation of life, instead of a sensuous and emotional

expression. The intellectualism of the critic lies at the very root of Fielding^s realism, his work remains, however, not science transfigured by art, but based on science.

Joseph Andrews: This novel, as suggested earlier, begins as a burlesque, in which the worldly-wise Pamela reappears as Mrs. Booby, and her brother, the virtuous footman Joseph Andrews repels the naughty overtures of his mistress. But this motive soon proves inadequate, and the book evolves as a series of picaresque adventures in which the central character is Parson Adams, who is a blend of simple goodness and comic idiosyncrasy. This charming cleric and the humorous figures like Mrs. Slipslop with several picturesque incidents leave a stronger impression than the ironical digs at Richardson.

Tom Jones: Tom Jones is a far superior exposition of Fielding's theory of the novel. Here Fielding poured out the wealth of a varied and ripened experience, and expressed in artistic terms his view how life should be lived. The plot is a piece of complicated and shapely architecture which turns on the ultimate recognition of Tom's blood relationship to Squire Allworthy, his wealthy stepfather, and on the ups and downs of his love for the adorable Sophia Western, daughter of a neighbouring landowner. Tom is a young man endowed with good nature and strong appetites, but open and unsuspicious. He falls an easy prey to temptation, and quickly repents. He is a sinner but not a villain. In all points he is the antithesis of Blifil, his rival in Allworthy's favour and for Sophia's hand. Blifil is mean and servile, and never has a good impulse. Blifil and the too faultless Allworthy as well as the philosophers Square and Thwackum are intellectual concepts, rather than real people. But apart from these, the novel is crowded with living human characters. Squire Western's portrayal, for instance, is perfectly

true to nature - he is coarse, brutal, selfish and stupid but entirely likeable.

Tom Jones, taken as a whole, is a faithful picture of Fielding's world. He never went far below the surface, but in the multitude of minor characters, the sense of abounding life and rich idiosyncrasy is never lacking. j

Amelia: Amelia is a satire which is in more earnest. Fielding's painful observation of the hideousness of vice in two years of service as a magistrate has given it a purpose. Amelia is a plain, long-suffering woman whose angelic values are revealed to her unheeding husband in the trials of married life. The absurdities of the law which made the courts a place where justice was bought and sold are exposed with wit and humour. But when Fielding depicts the rogues and the drunkards he assumes the censorial air of a justice diagnosing the demoralization of society and its causes. Here he comes close to the* specific realism of Defoe's *Moll Flanders* and *Colonel Jack.* The description of London life is full of particular detail. *Amelia* is the beginning of that branch of fiction which eventually brought forth the slum-novel.

TOBIAS SMOLLETT: Smollett was little affected by the recent improvements in the structure of the novel and drew from the obsolete picaresque romancers with their random adventures loosely strung on a hero's biography. He is a satirist who sees nothing in the world worthy of his admiration.

Peregrine Pickle is another picaresque tale, and the best characters are again seamen. Peregrine is a mean scoundrel like Roderick with whose adventures one cannot feel the slightest sympathy, and many other characters are recognizable caricatures of Smollett's enemies. Smollett had much power of derision, and could put life into a character by mere force of abuse. Yet the result was what has been described as "comic

beasts in human shape". The finest, however, far transcend mere caricature, like the humorous characters of Dickens, who owed into Smollett.

«. k Th* ripest 5ndvPlf auSa"teSt of h,s »*"» in his last - The *Expedition of Humphrey Clinker.* It chronicles the observations of a Welsh family - a group of delightful oddities - on a tour through England, Scotland and Wales. Many of the scenes are touched by a human feeling that is conspicuously missing in the rest of Smollett s works. This farcical miscellany is written in letters which reveal the incompatible views of the various chroniclers.

LAURENCE STERNE: Sterne began his literary career at the age of 47 with *Tristram Shandy.* It is the whimsical masterpiece of an incomparable jester. Tristram, however, is a person of slight importance in the galaxy of humorous creations that shine in the novel. His father and uncle are the figures on which the eye is chiefly focussed who, along with Dr. Slop, Mrs. Shandy, Corporal Trim and a number of minor characters make an inimitable group of humorous idealisms quite new to English fiction.

Tristram Shandy has been regarded as the progenitor of the 20th century 'stream-of-consciousness' k novel. The tale is erratically narrated by Tristram and the narrative is constantly interrupted by exuberant ¦*¦ digressions, and the sequence and emphasis of events are deliberately disordered. Parodying the new 'novel' form of his contemporaries, the narrator mocks the absurdity of development in narrative, insisting on beginning at the moment of

his conception and deliberately providing no consistent plot or conclusion. Sterne's wayward typography, which includes rows of asterisks, dashes, diagrams, blank pages and various typefaces, paradoxically emphasizes the cheerful view of the unreality of the 'novel' form which he is himself using.

Another work of Sterne was the *Sentimental Journey* - "Mr. Yorick's" account of his recent *experiences* in the continent. The Journey, with its vaguely-sketched incidents and continuous moralizings is a vehicle as charming as the more elaborate novel for Sterne's elusive humour and sentimentalism.

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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN LATER NOVELS *OF THE 18th* CENTURY

The **Novel After Fielding**

The idea of intellectual realism in the 18th century was completely fulfilled in *Tom Jones* in which Fielding undertook to mirror life faithfully, to resolve certain problems of conduct, and justify his exaggerated satire of vices and follies on the rational ground of the writer's duty to society. There was no deep change in the constitution of the novel until the new birth of poetry in

the Romantic Era sent vibrations through the entire realm of literature.

Putting aside the romanticists, we find that most of the novelists in the generation after Fielding fall into two groups, both of whom regard themselves as faithful chroniclers and critics. The one group deals in entertaining pictures of manners, or satire of a harsher strain. The other group comprises didactic writers, social speculators or propagandists, employing the novel for non-artistic purposes.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

While Smollett employed an exaggerated realism to reinforce his satire, his contemporary Goldsmith softened lines and toned down harsh colours until "we seem to see the lights and shades of reality through a mellow sunset haze."

Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World* is an essay in the Oriental manner then in vogue, consisting of letters from a Chinese philosopher studying Western society in London to his friend at home. Sketches of the various aspects of the London life are connected, as in *Spectator* and *Tatler,* by the mere suggestion of a story. The social critic comments upon manners, literature, art, theatre, politics and religious differences. Interludes in dialogues enliven the graver commentary, along with the humours of an original drawn from life like the Man in Black and the more satirical Beau Tibbs. The Chinese philosopher is little more than an attitude, and from the ethnic point of view is incorrectly drawn.

The Vicar of Wakefield combines the arcadian longings which Goldsmith had expressed more fancifully in *The Deserted Village* with the drollery that afterwards found vent in his sprightly comedies, *The Good Natur'd Man* and *She Stoops to Conquer.* It gives a classic picture of English country life in all its sweetness and charm. The plot is conventional and ultra-romantic. Troubles

are heaped, to an unheard-of excess, on the blameless vicar; and then, in defiance of all laws of probability, turned at a stroke to rejoicing. How a happy-go-lucky nomad like Goldsmith, who even when most prosperous never *knew what it was to have a home, came to depict the idyllic life of the vicar and his enchanting family* **i** <m»>2* 5>;sS s>§ht a contradiction, but on second thoughts, the most natural thing, it was the poetry of *unsatisfied* longing, as natural a fact as that the humdrum Richardson should create such a winged being as Clarissa.

The atmosphere *of the Vicar of Wakefield* is one of mercy and hope. It is not a profound philosophy, only an emanation of Goldsmith's brave and kindly temperament, which ever looked *on* the

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bright side and ignored the harsher teachings of experience. His disposition was too amiable and forgiving for either satire or unmitigated realism. He kept to the dramatic scheme of comedy and the apt alternation of narrative with life-like dialogue. The plain, detached manner of the narrative carries considerably greater force than the exclamatory style of the "novels of sentiment" of the time, (the novels of sentiment or sensibility illustrated the alliance of acute sensibility with true virtue. An adherence to strict morality and honour combined with a sympathetic heart marks the man or woman of sentiment. The cult may be traced to the works of Richardson and Fielding. Jane Austen's novels mock the "novel of sentiment" and *Sense and Sensibility* was intended to demonstrate the serious consequences of following its standards.) *The Vicar of Wakefield* contains the well-known poems 'The Hermit,' 'Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog,' and 'When Lovely Woman Stoops to Folly."

THE GOTHIC ROMANCE

The Romantic Revival began in the 18th century as a revolt from the "didactic materialism of the last two centuries when the canons holding authority were convention and artifice instead of Nature and Art." In fiction, two reactionary tendencies were at work-a return to older ideals of medievalism, and the deeper and more momentous impulse of "Return to Nature." Medievalism produced the Gothic Romances, imitations of ballads and metrical romances, as well as in the romantic reconstructions of the past in the novels of Scott, Dumas, etc. The other impulse produced a new fashion of the realistic novel.

The publication of Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* in 1776 was an epoch-making event. Historical in framework, it

created an extravagant sensation and artificial horrors which were to be the key-note of the Gothic Romance. The story is set in Italy in the 12th or 13th century, and Manfred, a tyrannical baron, his ill-used wife and beautiful daughter, and the gigantic apparition that haunts the castle are the puppets of a stilted tragedy. The stage is pseudo-historical for the sake of strangeness and freedom of invention.

The genre of Gothic novel was the favourite of women novelists. Miss Sophie Lee wrote *The Recess* which foresaw Scott's *Kenilworth.* Other early women writers of the Gothic Romance were Clara Reeve, Jane Porter and Mrs. Ann Radcliffe. Mrs. Radcliffe's novels *(A Sicilian Romance, Romance of the Forest, Mysteries of Udolpho, The Italian)* are pseudo-historical-though her stories are set in antiquity it is always the manners of her own time that are reproduced in them. She was a thorough romancer whose main endeavour was to create an enthralling effect with an exciting plot, haunting scenery, a poetical heroine and a sinister villain. The finest effect in her novels is perhaps the harmony of the scenic accompaniment with the feelings evoked by the story. She was extremely serious in her invocation of the magic atmosphere, but there was nothing grotesque in her novels as there was in *Otranto.*

In piling up effects of pure terror, Mrs. Radcliffe was far surpassed by other novelists like William Beckford. His *Vathek* is a brilliant medley of Oriental magic and Western comedy, a link between the Gothic tale of terror and the fashionable cult of Arabian fable. The grim, the grotesque and the sublime are embodied in the novel. There were several attempts at this time to graft oriental fantasies onto the Gothic frame, but the later products of the school attempted merely to inflict the most violent shocks upon our elementary feelings. This was the modest aim of Gregory Lewis's *The Monk,* a coarse melodrama in which horror turns to sickening disgust. The finest in

workmanship, Manturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* displays imagination of a horrible, morbid kind. In Mrs. Shelley's *Frankenstein,* the superstructure is admirably done, sheer horror staggers the mind and lets probability go.

DIDACTIC AND PROPAGANDIST FICTION

Dr. Johnson's *Rasselas* stands apart from the theoretical and propagandist novels that were so abundant in the half-century after Fielding. It is the direct successor of *Euphues,* the moral treatise in the outward guise of a novel; but it goes far deeper into human concerns, for it deals with eternal as well temporal issues.

All the numerous revolutionary novels of this period were influenced directly or indirect^ ty tte teachings and art of Rousseau. They accept and almost caricature the scientific basis of realism, anoa\ the same time proclaim the advent of romantic impulses. Writers found the public ready to accept the novel as a warrantable account of things as they are, and made it a vehicle for promulgating ideas on the future of society.

One of Rousseau's disciples, Henry Brooke, gave the first English example of the pedagogic novel. It is a highly unequal, childish novel; but gives the best picture of boyhood prior to *Tom Brown's Schooldays.* The novel describes the childhood and education of a nobleman, digressing into the denunciation of existing order and humanitarian dreams of the future.

Thomas Day's *Sandford and Merton,* another novel of this genre offered models of stories for children to make them realize the value of science and virtue. Day was an influence on Maria Edgeworth, whose stories for children belong to the genre of didactic fiction.

William Godwin was the foremost of the novels who wrote revolutionary fiction. His *Caleb Williams* has survived better than his other works. (Godwin was Mary Shelley's father.) Godwin was a rationalist.

Other writers of the period are Mrs. Inchbald (who told pathetic stories for the promulgation of social and educational theories), Mrs. Opie (author of *The Father and Daughter* and *Adeline Mowbray-the* latter written on the theme of the emancipated woman and about Mary Wollstonecraft), Robert Bage, Thomas Amory, etc.

CHAPTER NINETEEN DRAMA IN THE 18th CENTURY

The stage production of a play will be successful only if the dramatist, actors, stage managers, etc. collaborate. A play becomes literature only when it creates an impression on the readers without the help of the collaborators. Drama, being the most complex and expensive form of art, needs the patronage of the public. Hence it is more influenced by social, financial and administrative considerations than any other genre.

After the Glorious revolution of 1688, during the reign of William and Mary, drama became weak and ceased to be a national art form. It had fallen to obscenity and licentiousness and was attacked by Jeremy Collier in 1697 in his *Short View of the Immorality and Prof oneness of the English Stage.* Collier got much public support, and even though the Restoration

dramatists continued to write, the Restoration Comedy was visibly in its decline.

Drama could easily have been reborn througrrthe works of the Sentimental Comedy writers. But they were too full of the spirit of refinement and moralityrtoo prejudiced against the old drama of incident and intrigue, to effect the production of healthy, meritorious plays.

Colley Cibber and Richard Steele were the foremost among them; both introduced a moral tone into their comedies, never quite realizing the limitations of the stage. Steele had a better literary sense and a more genuine insight into his characters but he tried to create pathos without its foil of humour and created unconvincing situations.

The tragedians of this period were hardly more successful. But they were popular, and one reason for this would probably be the projection they gave to attractive actresses. Nicholas Rowe was a major writer of this period and he produced two tragedies - *The Fair Penitent* and *Jane shore.* Addison's *Cato* was based on the Greek tragic model; it was faultlessly constructed but uninspired. Other notable tragedians were Edward Young, John Hughes and James Thomson. Their works have many dramatic possibilities but end in mere rhetoric.

In 1728 John Gay brought out his *Beggar's Opera,* noted for its charming songs and humour. This ballad opera was written under Swift's suggestion and combines Italian opera with political satire. The principal characters are Peachum, his wife, his daughter Polly, Lockit, Lucy and Captain MacHeath. This opera met with unparalleled success on stage.

Perhaps for the first time in the history of drama, an actor at this time exercised a great influence on dramatic development. He was David Garrick who convinced theatre-goers that facial expression and gestures were more effective than declamation. He found freedom in the rapid movement

and passions of Elizabethan drama. Garrick was a great reviver of Shakespeare, he introduced French decoration and cleared the stage of spectators. The actors were now viewed from one side only, and he successfully restored action to the theatre.

The sentimental comedy flourished during this time in the plays of Kelly, Colman and Cumberland. It depicted genteel life in which masculine virtue and feminine delicacy became the victim to some villainous conspiracy. The audience enjoys the luxury of sympathy till perhaps the fifth Act when the hero and heroine triumph through sheer merit and a lucky turn of fortune. The life depicted is thoroughly artificial, characterization is conventional and the plot melodramatic. The writers believed in the fundamental goodness of human nature and in the rapid development of stage plots. Their plays survived the opposition of Goldsmith and Sheridan for quite sometime.

GOLDSMITH

Goldsmith believed that the follies of contemporary private life were much more amusing than its virtues. So he set himself to create a number of stage situations in which the eccentricities and faults of ordinary people appeared in laughable light. He had a keen sense of humour but lacked the mastery of plot-construction. *The Good-Natur'd Man* for instance has a confused plot and is full of make-believe. It is the story of Mr. Honeywood who is too nai've and too loyal to his friends, but who is nevertheless cured of his folly. A memorable character is that of Croaker. In the preface to this play Goldsmith attacks 'genteel cbmedy' and praises the comedy of 'nature and humour'. *She Stoops to Conquer* is perhaps his

best works. It is the story of two London gentlemen travelling to the country to meet their sweethearts; they lodge at their destination under the impression that it is an inn where the heroine pretends to be the bar-maid. Comedy ensues from the complication that follow and the play secured immortal fame with the charm of Goldsmith's touch. Goldsmith's plays arek written in the manner of the comedy of manners and opened a new direction in the development of comedy.

SHERIDAN

Sheridan had less sympathy with human nature than Goldsmith, he lacked Goldsmith's insight into character, but had a far deeper knowledge of the society and had a mastery over plot-construction. He constructed comedy out of brilliant dialogue and dramatic irony.

Sheridan's first play *The Rivals* established him as a successful writer and opened the doors to the fashionable society he had always sought. The play depends mostly on stock characters of Latin and French comedy. It is set in Bath where Sheridan had lived for a couple of years. The principal characters are Captain Absolute, Mrs. Malaprop and Lydia. *The School for Scandal* is a brilliant compromise between the new sentimental drama and the old comedy of manners. The principal characters are Joseph Surface and his brother Charles, Sir Peter Teazle, Benjamin Backbite, Crabtree, Lady Sneerwell, etc. Both plays have achieved immortal fame through their faultless plots, epigrammatic dialogue and touch of satire. Another important play of Sheridan is *The Critic.*

Except a few plays of this period, hardly any deserve to be ranked as literature. There are many reasons for this decadence. One of these would be 'the deterioration of the audiences. The thinking | scholarly people and the upper classes increasingly kept away from the theatre. The actors had therefore \ to cultivate a

coarser, more emphatic style. There were some authoritative books written on costume ; ¦and staging written at this time and there was an increasing emphasis laid on historical accuracy - this ; affected the men who wrote for the theatre. But the most damaging influence was the growing popularity of the novel which attracted the energies and wits of humorists.

CHAPTER TWENTY THE NEW POETRY OF THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD (18th - 19th century)

Reaction against the dominant ideals of the Augustan school is a salient feature of late 18th century poetry. This reaction began when Pope himself was at the heights of his fame, but grew in the decades preceding the rise of Wordsworth. This reaction, however, was not formally organized and had no professed leader.

Augustan poetry was of the intellect-a deep sense of the mystery and wonder of life, and a renewed impetus on passion and imagination characterized the reaction to Augustan poetry. While Augustan poetry confined itself to "The Town", the new poetry turned to nature and rural life, and to man as man. The whole conception of poetry changed - emphasis was now on originality and inspiration as against craftsmanship. Romance was revived in imitation of Spenser, the old ballads and as a result of Gothic and medieval revival. There was an attempt to break away from the diction of Pope and to make poetry simpler and more natural. Experimentations in literature were encouraged and the supremacy of the classic couplet was questioned.

John Dyer was one of the first poets of this reactionary movement. Grongar Hill, The Country Walk, The Ruins of Rome and The Fleece are his major works. Dyer had an intense love for the scenery of the Welsh hills and he had a musical delight in recounting the scenes through which his childhood had strayed. Dyer's observation of nature was exact and in this respect he excelled even Milton. His is a painter's, rather than a poet's eye. His poetry sometimes labours under contemporary diction but professes a love for the simplicity of the country than for the town. However some of his contemporaries attacked him for being too coarse and injudicious. The literary rebellion was in its infancy and even Walpole who had started the rebellion in architecture and fiction failed to see that he had an ally in Dyer.

William Shenstone was Dyer's contemporary mostly remembered today for his reminiscences of childhood. His poetry did not have much poetic quality but his experimentations with the trisyllabic metre and the touch of pathos in his works are notable.

Edward Young, though over-ambitious and rather unscrupulous as a person, had remained a major name in late 18th century poetry. His principal works are The Last Day, The Force of Religion or Vanquished Love and The Complaint or Night Thoughts. He has also written a few tragedies and satires. Young's insincerity can be believed to have ruined his work whenever he attempted to scale the heights of thought and passion. As a poet of transition he has made some major contributions to form. In Night Thoughts he abandoned the couplet and turned to blank verse. Later he defended blank verse and argued that new poets should abandon old models and rely on their own inspiration.

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James Thomson is best remembered for The Seasons and The *Castle of Indolence.* The former is a descriptive poem in blank verse; the latter is in Spenserian stanza and describes in two Cantos the enchanted castle of the wizard Indolence and the conquest of Indolence by the Knights of Arts and Industry. The Seasons can be considered the first long poem which is centred on nature instead of man. It does not however entirely break free of the conventions of its age-its vocabulary is highly Latinized; its style ornate and rhetorical and the movement of blank verse often suggests the couplet. However Thomson emerges in this work as a real lover of nature and treats rustic people and manners in such detail as was often deemed vulgar in the London drawing-room. *The Castle of Indolence* shows his love of Spenser, his 'master' and is indebted to Spenser for its Gothic machinery.

Though Thomas Gray's work is small in quantity, it is so exquisite in quality that he has secured a place among the finest poetic artists in English literature. Gray's 'Augustan' phase produced a number of noteworthy efforts like de Principus Cogitandi, Agrippine, A Hymn to Ignorance, Ode on the Spring, To Adversity, etc. They are conventional in form, imagery and diction and his lyric poems were indebted to Dryden. Then came *An Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* in which signs of the new spirit are discernible-faithful rendering of landscape, the churchyard setting, sympathy towards the poor, the twilight atmosphere, and the mood of pensive melancholy.

The Elegy marked the second phase in the evolution of Gray's poetic career. The third phase was marked by intense romanticism as in The Progress of Poesy and The Bard, and even

mare in the poems of Celtic themes - The Fatal Sisters, The Descent of Odin, etc. Gray's letters offer a commentary upon his poetic development. They show how keenly he followed the influence of the 'new spirit' in literature and how responsive he was to every development. Gray held strongly that "the language of the age is never the language of poetry". He was professedly indebted to Dryden and had small regard for the philosophers of his own age. All of Gray's poems are charming in spite of flaws in workmanship. His Pindaric odes are not the most popular but perhaps the most perfect. Critics have differed widely on the merits of Gray's work. This is probably because Gray belonged to the transitional school and critics are prone to highlight the one side or the other of him. In his language, ornaments, his inversions and personifications, Gray is of the classical school but his sense of grandeur and sublimity, his love of nature and the rural, mark him the herald of the coming age.

In William Collins's poetry, one can discern a warm heart and a keen sense of beauty. But in form he was faulty. Collins was politically a disciple of Milton and he openly sang the virtues of republicanism. The works of Collins are mainly lyric or elegiac; in his Odes he shows exquisite taste and an inborn sense of song. The most remarkable of Collins's poems is the Ode on the Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland. Completely emancipated from the Augustan tradition, it establishes Collins as a pioneer in the revival of Romanticism.

Thomas Chatterton, another major transitional poet, showed even as a child an extraordinary faculty for exploiting the weaknesses of human najture. Though he died young, he had a man's familiarity with the evils of the world. Chatterton's poems fall into two categories - those which he acknowledged and those which he ascribed to Thomas Rowley, a mythical 15th century poet. The acknowledged poems are miscellaneous in character and prove the writer's versatility. Even though they do

not quite break free from Augustan conventions, many of them show great vigour and skill. The pseudo-antique 'Rowleian' poems deceived critical readers with Chatterton's imitations of 15th century dialect, but contain many borrowings from 18th century poets and anachronisms in thought, phrase and form. These poems show the growing strength of the Gothic revival in the transitional period.

William Blake was a mystic and visionary with great imaginative insight into life. His principal works are *Poetical Sketches, Songs of Innocence, The Book of* The/, The *Marriage of Heaven and Hell, The Gates of Paradise, Songs of Experience, Jerusalem,* etc. Most of them can be regarded as 'apocalyptic' literature and to the casual reader appear chaotic and obscure. They display daring originality and pregnancy of thought, and have a spontaneity and charm that cover up their technical imperfections. They are harbingers of the Romantic tradition in their lyricism, democratic sentiment, love of nature and simple life, and of childhood and home. Blake shows influence of the Elizabethans and Spenser, of Percy's *Retiques* and of Chatterton.

Robert Burns, Scottish poet endowed with the marvellous gift of song, was supreme in his lyrics though he also made a considerable impact through his descriptive poems and satires. Absolute sincerity lies at the root of all his work. His work was fashioned from his own soil and experiences and he always remained a faithful spokesman of the Scottish peasants - his best work is almost entirely in his Scots poetry, while his 'English' poems are too literary in flavour, falling into the artificial mannerisms of the time. Bums's poetic ancestry is to be sought among his Scottish predecessors, especially Allan Ramsay and Robert Fergusson. More than any other poet of his age, he brought the passion of the natural man into verse. Burns was much affected by the revolutionary stir of thought at the end of the century. The reward for his sincerity and perfection has

perhaps been that his writings have become a part of the English speaking world to an extent scarcely paralleled except by Shakespeare.

George Crabbe has been considered a great realist of English poetry. He takes his subjects from actual life. His guiding principle is the uncompromising adherence to visible truth. His reaction to poetic falsification of life led him to dwell too much upon the dark and sordid aspect of human nature. He

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depicts the incidents of domestic life and the beauties of landscape with a narrative charm and touch of humour. He did not show much Romantic influence in matter, spirit or style, and was much attached to I the heroic couplet. Later in his career however he experimented with other metres. j

- William Cowper, sensitive and disappointed in life to a level which drove him to mental imbalance,] reflects in his art the morbidity and tragedy that characterised his life. His poems also attest his tender love ¦ for man and nature, and the playful humour which even his religious fanaticism and derangement was powerless to destroy. His early writings are mainly didactic and satirical pieces, consisting of *Table Talk, '¦ Progress of Error, Truth, Hope, Charity,* etc. In matter and form they are in general harmony with the tastes of his time, though they are simpler. His later poems of importance include The Task, An Epistle to Joseph Hill, John Gilpin and The Castaway. In his work Cowper was singularly independent of theories, movements and schools.. His poetry is one of immediate experience and in it the personal note is strong throughout. In \ view of the extreme subjectivity of romantic literature this fact is historically important. Cowper's fine •humanitarianism is one of the most persistent features of his poetry - he proclaims the brotherhood of man, denounces slavery, speaks boldly about war, advocates political liberty and attacks Bastille as the symbol of oppression. Despite much admixture of the old formalism, no man did more than Cowper to bring back into ' English poetry the accent of nature and sincerity.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE ROMANTIC POETS

At the turn of the century, fired by ideas of personal and political liberty and of the energy and sublimity of the natural world, artists and intellectuals sought to break the bonds of 18th-century convention. Although the works of Jean Jacques Rousseau and William Godwin had great influence, the French Revolution and its aftermath had the strongest impact of all. In England initial support for the Revolution was primarily Utopian and idealist, and when the French failed to live up to expectations, most English intellectuals renounced the Revolution. However, the romantic vision had taken forms other than political, and these developed apace.

In *Lyrical Ballads* (1798 and 1800), a watershed in literary history, William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge presented and illustrated a liberating aesthetic: poetry should express, in genuine language, experience as filtered through personal emotion and imagination; the truest experience was to be found in nature. The concept of the *Sublime* strengthened this turn to nature, because in wild countrysides the power of the sublime could be felt most immediately. Wordsworth's romanticism is probably most fully realized in his great autobiographical poem, "The Prelude" (1805-50). In search of sublime moments, romantic poets wrote about the marvellous and supernatural, the exotic, and the medieval. But they also found beauty in the lives of simple rural people and aspects of the everyday world.

The second generation of romantic poets included John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and George Gordon, Lord Byron. In Keats's great odes, intellectual and emotional sensibility merge in language of great power and beauty. Shelley, who combined soaring lyricism with an apocalyptic political vision, sought more extreme effects and occasionally achieved them, as in his great drama *Prometheus Unbound* (1820). His wife, Mary

Wollstonecraft Shelley, wrote the greatest of the Gothic romances, *Frankenstein* (1818).

Lord Byron was the prototypical romantic hero, the envy and scandal of the age. He has been continually identified with his own characters, particularly the rebellious, irreverent, erotically inclined Don Juan. Byron invested the romantic lyric with a rationalist irony. Minor romantic poets include Robert Southeybest-remembered today for his story "Goldilocks and the Three Bears"-Leigh Hunt, Thomas Moore, and Walter Savage Landor.

WILLIAM **WORDSWORTH**

Wordsworth's personality and poetry were deeply influenced by his love of nature, especially by the sights and scenes of the Lake Country, in which he spent most of his mature life. A profoundly earnest and sincere thinker, he displayed a high seriousness comparable*at times, to Milton's but tempered with tenderness and a love of simplicity,

Wordsworth's earlier work shows the poetic beauty of commonplace things and people as in "Margaret," "Peter Bell," "Michael," and "The Idiot Boy." His use of the language of ordinary speech was heavily criticized, but it helped to rid English poetry of the more artificial conventions of 18th-century diction. Among his other well-known poems are "Lucy" ("She dwelt among the untrodden ways"), "The Solitary Reaper," "Resolution and Independence," "Daffodils," "The Rainbow," and the sonnet "The World Is Too Much with Us."

Although Wordsworth was venerated in the 19th century, by the early 20th century his reputation had declined. He was criticized for the unevenness of his poetry, for his rather marked capacity for bathos, and for his transformation from an open-minded liberal to a cramped conservative. In recent years, however,

Wordsworth has again been recognized as a great English poet-a profound, original thinker who created a new poetic tradition.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Although Coleridge had been busy and productive, publishing both poetry and much topical prose, it was not until his friendship with Wordsworth that he wrote his best poems. In 1798 Coleridge and Wordsworth jointly published the volume *Lyrical Ballads,* whose poems and preface made it a seminal work and manifesto of the romantic movement in English literature.

Coleridge's main contribution to the volume was the haunting, dreamlike ballad "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." This long poem, as well as "Kubla Khan" and "Christabel," written during the same period, are Coleridge's best-known works. All three make use of exotic images and supernatural themes. "Dejection: An Ode," published in 1802, was the last of Coleridge's great poems. It shows the influence of (or affinity to) some poetic ideas of Wordsworth, notably the meditation upon self, nature, and the relationships among emotion, sense experience, and understanding. His *Confessions of an Enquiring Spirit* (ed. by his nephew H. N. Coleridge) was published posthumously in 1840.

Coleridge worked for many years on his *Biographia Literaha* (1817), containing accounts of his literary life and critical essays on philosophical and literary subjects. It presents Coleridge's theories of the creative imagination, but its debt to other writers, notably the German idealist philosophers, is often so heavy that the line between legitimate borrowing and plagiarism becomes blurred. This borrowing tendency, evident also in some of his poetry, together with Coleridge's notorious inability to finish projects-and his proposal of impractical ones-made him a problematic figure.

Coleridge's lifelong friend Charles Lamb called him a "damaged archangel." Indeed, 20th-century editorial scholarship has unearthed additional evidence of plagiarism; thus, Coleridge is still a controversial figure. However, the originality and beauty of his best poetry and his enormous influence on the intellectual and aesthetic life of his time is unquestioned. He was reputedly a brilliant conversationalist, and his lectures on Shakespeare remain among the most important statements in literary criticism.

LORD BYRON

Ranked with Shelley and Keats as one of the great Romantic poets, Byron became famous throughout Europe as the embodiment of romanticism. His good looks, his lameness, and his flamboyant lifestyle all contributed to the formation of the Byronic legend. By the mid-20th century his reputation as a poet had been eclipsed by growing critical recognition of his talents as a wit and satirist.

Byron's poetry covers a wide range. In *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* and in *The Vision of Judgment* (1822) he wrote 18th-century satire. He also created the "Byronic hero," who appears consummately in the Faustian tragedy *Manfred* (1817)-a mysterious, lonely, defiant figure whose past hides some great crime. *Cain* (1821) raised a storm of abuse for its skeptical attitude toward religion. The verse tale Beppo is in the otrava *rima* (eight-line stanzas in iambic pentameter) that Byron later used for his acknowledged masterpiece Don *Juan* (1819-24), an epic-satire combining Byron's art as a storyteller, his lyricism, his cynicism, and his detestation of convention.

PERCY **BYSSHE SHELLEY**

Shelley composed the great body of his poetry in Italy. *The Cenci,* a tragedy in verse exploring moral deformity, was

published in 1819, followed by his masterpiece, *Prometheus Unbound* (1820). In this lyrical drama Shelley poured forth all his passions and beliefs, which were modelled after the ideas of Plato. *Epipsychidion* (1821) is a poem addressed to Emilia Viviani, a young woman whom Shelley met in Pisa and with whom he developed a brief but close friendship.

His great elegy, *Adonais* (1821), written in memory of Keats, asserts the immortality of beauty. *Hellas* (1822), a lyrical drama, was inspired by the Greek struggle for independence. His other poems include *Alastor* (1816) and the shorter poems "Ode to the West Wind," "To a Skylark," "Ozymandias," "The Indian Serenade," and "When the Lamp Is Shattered."

Most of Shelley's poetry reveals his philosophy, a combination of belief in the power of human love and reason, and faith in the perfectibility and ultimate progress of man. His lyric poems are superb in their beauty, grandeur, and mastery of" language. Although Matthew **Arnold** labeled him an "ineffectual angel," 20thcentury critics have taken Shelley seriously, recognizing his wit, his gifts as a satirist, and his influence as a social and political thinker.

JOHN KEATS

The son of a livery stable keeper, Keats attended school at Enfield, where he became the friend of Charles Cowden Clarke, the headmaster's son, who encouraged his early learning. Apprenticed to a surgeon (1811), Keats came to know Leigh Hunt and his literary circle, and in 1816 he gave up surgery to write poetry. His first volume of poems appeared in 1817. It included "I stood tip-toe upon a little hill," "Sleep and Poetry," and the famous sonnet "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer."

Endymion, a long poem, was published in 1818. Although faulty in structure, it is nevertheless full of rich imagery and color. Keats returned from a walking tour in the Highlands to find himself attacked in *Blackwood's Magazine-an* article berated him for belonging to Leigh Hunt's "Cockney school" of poetry-and in the *Quarterly Review.* The critical assaults of 1818 mark a turning point in Keats's life; he was forced to examine his work more carefully, and as a result the influence of Hunt was diminished. However, these attacks did not contribute to Keats's decline in health and his early death, as Shelley maintained in his elegy "Adonais."

Keats's passionate love for Fanny Brawne seems to have begun in 1818. Fanny's letters to Keats's sister show that her critics' contention that she was a cruel flirt was not true. Only Keats's failing health prevented their marriage. He had contracted tuberculosis, probably from nursing his brother Tom, who died in 1818. With his friend, the artist Joseph Severn, Keats sailed for Italy shortly after the publication of *Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, and Other Poems* (1820), which contains most of his important work and is probably the greatest single volume of poetry published in England in the 19th century He died in Rome in Feb., 1821, at the age of 25.

In spite of his tragically brief career, Keats is one of the most important English poets. He is also among the most personally appealing. Noble, generous, and sympathetic, he was capable not only *of* passionate love but also of warm, steadfast friendship. Keats is ranked, with Shelley and Byron, as one of the three great Romantic poets. Such poems as "Ode to a Nightingale," "Ode on a Grecian Urn," "To Autumn," and "Ode on Melancholy" are unequalled for dignity, melody, and richness of sensuous imagery. All of his poetry is filled with a mysterious and elevating sense of beauty and joy.

Keats's posthumous pieces include "La Belle Dame sans Merci," in its way as great an evocation of romantic medievalism as "The Eve of St. Agnes." Among his sonnets, familiar ones are "When I have fears that I may cease to be" and "Bright starl would I were as steadfast as thou art." "Lines on the Mermaid Tavern," "Fancy," and "Bards of Passion and of Mirth" are delightful short poems.

Some of Keats's finest work is in the unfinished epic "Hyperion." In recent years critical attention has focused on Keats's philosophy, which involves not abstract thought but rather absolute receptivity to experience. This attitude is indicated in his celebrated term "negative capability"-"to let the mind be a thoroughfare for all thought."

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CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO NOVELISTS OF

THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

Though Fielding established the 'dramatic' structure of the novel in *Tom Jones,* it was only in mid-^"1 century that the novelists began a deeper reading of life that marked the transition into the modern. Jane Austen adopted Fielding's dramatic structure and comic treatment, and after her first attempts at fiction, achieved a high form of intellectual realism. Scott too adopted Fielding's dramatic scheme, though not his intellectual interpretation. Scott simply enjoyed life and portrayed without criticism its picturesqueness, humours and idiosyncrasies.

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Maria Edgeworth's first stories might be grouped with the didactic fiction of an earlier age. Her children's stories are richer in human interest than any other productions of this school. She was also a novelist of local colour, especially in her Irish novels. Her first long story *Castle Rackrent* has been a major influence on later novelists. Two later Irish novels *The Absentee* and *Ormond* combined the dramatic plot of the novel of manners with the rich comedy of national characteristics. The success of these Irish novels, as declared in the general preface to the Waverley novels, induced Scott to do for his country what Miss. Edgeworth had achieved for Ireland. *Belinda,* the first of Edgeworth's novels of fashionable life, is a good example of her didactic method. Belinda is the ideal of womanhood and feminine good sense; the novel is a general statement of the novelist's views on women's sphere and duties. In the *Tales of Fashionable Life,* every story illustrates a clear-cut precept. Everything is clearly defined, to

every person is allotted a definite portion of goodness and badness. Edgeworth was a gifted novelist with a fine sense of humour but was handicapped by the rigid framework prescribed by her pedagogic mission.

Jane Austen was the daughter of a clergyman and was educated at home. Her worldly experience was limited and as a novelist of manners she kept within rigid boundaries. But as a novelist of character she ranged widely though she rarely penetrated below the prose world of comedy. Jane Austen's humour has been compared to that of Shakespeare, but she had none of his poetry and in her there are only faint glimpses of the deeper pathos and tragedy of life.

Austen's novels are intellectual but not very philosophic. She stood aloof from the story, never commented on the action or the characters directly, always preferring subtle hints to blatant moralizing. Austen's first novel *Sense and Sensibility,* at first called 'Elinor and Marianne', displays her impatience with sentimentality. The protagonists provide a symmetrical contrast - Elinor is commonsense and self-control,

Marianne luxuriates in romantic emotion. As expected, the former has little to complain but the latter meets with nothing but trouble. What is unexpected is Marianne's reformation - though she once believed that no one can fall in love twice, after being jilted once she marries sensibly and unromantically, a middle-aged gentleman, who like her had undergone the chastening experience of a prior attachment.

Pride and Prejudice, originally entitled 'First Impressions', is Austen's masterpiece. It tells how a young lady (Elizabeth) of thoughtful and critical disposition encounters the haughtiness of a gentleman (Darcy) who finally falls in love with her. Incidents occur which deepen her prejudice and intensify his pride, but finally disillusionment sets in, true character is revealed, and the lovers are united. The unbalanced father Mr. Bennett, his silly wife, the absurd cleric Mr. Collins and the magnificent snob Catherine de Bourgh furnish the story with delicious comedy.

Mansfield Park elaborates the same kind of comparisons and contrasts in the complete history of the different marriage unions of three sisters. The eldest, Fanny Price is one of the most memorable of Austen's characters with her strength and earnestness. Emma, in the novel of the same name, too was one of Austen's' favourites-a pretty, wilful young lady whose rage for match-making and aptitude for mistakes get herself and her friends into endless scrapes, for which she had to suffer. These two novels make a comprehensive and mature study of the 'domestic and social scenes which Austen painted with the dual colours Of comedy and pathos.

Northanger Abbey, a satire on the Radcliffian school of Gothic Romance, is the story of a young girl whose mind has been fed on the groans and tears of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Italian.* The narrative moves with delicate humour through the history of her entry into life and the passing away of

her illusions about untold horrors and crimes at an abbey where she stays for a while.

Persuasion was published along with *Northanger Abbey* and is a tender love story touched by pathos. Ann Eliot parts from her lover but after several years, misunderstandings are cleared and the old love reasserted. The novel differs from the rest in one point - the climax of the story is a scene in which reconciliation is brought about in a room full of people without a word passing between the long-estranged lovers. In its delicate intensity, this chapter reaches the supreme perfection of high comedy and reveals a power which is visible in no other of Austen's works.

Sir Walter Scott established himself as a major 19th century novelist through his 26 historical romances or Waverley novels. These can be grouped into two-those set in a remote period and those set in the previous period. The first set, beginning with *Waverley,* were all Scottish stories set in recent times. The publication of *Ivanhoe* marked a new phase. The novel is a brilliant picture of medieval England. In *The Monastry* and its sequel *The Abbot* he returned to Scottish scenes in the time of May. *Kenilworth* pictured Elizabethan England.

In his novels Scott gathered up the different threads of romanticism, combined them with Fielding's realism and produced a fiction that epitomised the characteristics of both. Years later, Thackeray rebelled against Scott's romantic nonsense. But there was a substantial reality behind the romantic glamour. Scott united the antiquarian zeal of the historical romancer with a superior knowledge of history. The metrical histories inaugurated with *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* are the nearest modern reproduction of the medieval romances of chivalry. His poems exercised and refined Scott's imagination.

Scott did not give up the familiar inventions of Gothic romance but employed them with skill and discretion. Rather

than choosing incredible figures from the other world, Scott preferred more moving effects of beings living'on the * verge of both worlds: Scott's theatrical inclinations often gave rise to melodrama instead of tragedy.

Romanticism was the main source of Scott's influence. But his greater qualities are his characterization and his dramatic technique. But he was often too careless for strict elaboration of plot. He had little interest in moral and other problems and moved only by the stirring animation of the human spectacle. He never went very deep into motives or analysis of character. His characters exist for themselves; they are never invented to fit the plot or have any intellectual significance. His men and women seem simply to have been born, not invented.

This is most evident, perhaps in his Scottish novels. In them every character is a living individual born out of Scott's own experience. Scott never caricatured men, though he created ridiculous figures, they were entirely credible and realistic. His art was entirely un-conscious and spontaneous.

Scott never freed his diction from the shackles of Johnsonian prose. His style had many good qualities but often it was charmless and pedestrian. His dialogue however was natural and vigorous.

Scott's art was a wide departure from Fielding's theory of deliberate intellectual construction. It reasserted the rights of free poetic creation. He was the founder of the historical novel and a model to innumerable English and foreign romancers. Scott's delight in picturing life for its own sake without any motive of critiquing or distorting it made his story-telling unrivalled in its simple air and in evoking an atmosphere of plain reality.

Thomas Love Peacock was another notable writer of this period. He wrote *Headlong Hall, Melincourt, Nightmare Abbey*

and other novels apart from some verse. In *Melincourt,* Southey, Wordsworth, Coleridge,

Canning and other well known persons figure. Byron, Shelley and Coleridge appear under thin disguises and in ridiculous roles in *Nightmare Abbey.*

Sir Walter Scott gave a tremendous impetus to the historical novel. Even major writers like John Gait and Lockhaft attempted the genre. The most industrious of historical novelists was G.P.R. James. Another writer, William-Ainsworth, had Gothic inclinations. *Rookwood* and *Jack Sheppard are* his famous novels. Charles Lever, Lord Lytton and even Dickens and Thackeray continued the tradition of historical novel in the Victorian period.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

VICTORIAN POETRY

The Victorian period is characterized by intense and prolific activity in literature, especially by novelists and poets, philosophers and essayists. Dramatists of any note are few.

As with all the literature of the Victorian era, much of the poetry of the day was concerned with contemporary social problems. Change, rather than stability, came to be accepted for the first time as normal in the nature of human outlook. Culturally and in many ways socially, the Victorian period saw the outset and display of the problems which the 20th century had to solve. Victorian Poetry, which can be classified as *Early* (1837-51), *Mid* (1851-70) and *Late* (1870-1901), saw the progress in poetic sensibility from the Romantic Era to the Modernist Era.

The sonnet was a popular form in Victorian poetry, notably in the work of Christina Rossetti, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and

Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Gerard Manley Hopkins experimented very boldly in the form, and produced some of his best work in what he claimed to be sonnets, though they are often scarcely recognizable as such.

The preeminent poet of the Victorian age was Alfred, Lord Tennyson. Although romantic in subject matter, his poetry was tempered by personal melancholy; in its mixture of social certitude and religious doubt it reflected the age. The poetry of Robert Browning and his wife, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, was immensely popular, though Elizabeth's was more venerated during their lifetimes. Browning is best remembered for his superb dramatic monologues. Rudyard Kipling, the poet of the empire triumphant, captured the quality of the life of the soldiers of British expansion. Some fine religious poetry was produced by Francis Thompson, Alice Meynell, Christina Rossetti, and Lionel Johnson.

In the middle of the 19th century the so-called Pre-Raphaelites, led by the painter-poet Dante Gabriel Rossetti, sought to revive what they judged to be the simple, natural values and techniques of medieval life and art. Their quest for a rich symbolic art led them away, however, from the mainstream. William Morris-designer, inventor, printer, poet, and social philosopher-was the most versatile of the group, which included the poets Christina Rossetti and Coventry Patmore.

Algernon Charles Swinburne began as a Pre-Raphaelite but soon developed his own classically influenced, sometimes florid style. A. E. Housman and Thomas Hardy, Victorian figures who lived on into the 20th cent., share a pessimistic view in their poetry, but Housman's well-constructed verse is rather more superficial. The great innovator among the late Victorian poets was the Jesuit priest Gerard Manley Hopkins. The concentration and originality of his imagery, as well as his jolting meter ("sprung rhythm"), had a profound effect on 20th-century poetry.

During the 1890s the most conspicuous figures on the English literary scene were the decadents. The principal figures in the group were Arthur Symons, Ernest Dowson, and, first among them in both notoriety and talent, Oscar Wilde. The Decadents' disgust with bourgeois complacency led them to extremes of behavior and expression. However limited their accomplishments, they pointed out the hypocrisies in Victorian values and institutions. The sparkling, witty comedies of Oscar Wilde and the comic operettas of W. S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan were perhaps the brightest achievements of 19th-century British drama.

ALFRED TENNYSON (1809-92)

Tennyson's earliest volume of poems was published in collaboration with his brother-Poems *by Two Brothers* (1826). While at Cambridge, he got the Chancellor's English Medal for *Timbuctoo.* Tennyson's dear friend Arthur Hallam died in 1833, which occasioned *In Memoriam.* Other major works include *The Princess, Maud, Idylls of the King, Enoch Arden, Queen Mary, Becket,* etc.

Tennyson's character was remarkable for the combination of ruggedness and delicacy. Morbidly shy of strangers and publicity, he shunned public life and social interaction. His recluse-like habits narrowed his outlook on life and left their mark upon his work.

Tennyson was haunted by the mystery of life, its mingled joys and pains. But he found firm ground in two positive affirmations-God and immortality. In politics, Tennyson was an exponent of the very cautious Liberalism of the mid-Victorian age. Dread of revolution, of rash rupture with the past, of intemperate experiments lay at the very root of his thought, and made him essentially the poet of

tradition and order. Yet he was an apostle of gradual progress. In early manhood he was enthusiastic about science and commerce, but alarmed at the drastic changes it brought to life. His belief in i evolution, always a steadying element in his thought, brought a certain hope back to him at the end. In democracy he had no confidence, and while he showed genuine sympathy with the masses, it was obviously the sympathy of an "aristocratic outsider.

Tennyson had the highest conception of the poet's vocation. The moral and spiritual power of poetry was always uppermost in his mind. 'Art for art's sake' was for him heresy. He attached the greatest importance to technique and to the labour which is necessary to attain perfection.

The classic poems including *Lotos-Eaters, Ulysses,* and *Tithonus* comprise some of Tennyson's finest work. Like Keats, he was attracted by the beauty of classic stories; like Wordsworth, he brought out its implicit moral meaning. It was in these semi-dramatic, semi-lyrical pieces that he found the right vehicle for his forte-the expression of a complex mood, with exquisite landscape harmonies. In the English Idylls and kindred poems, Tennyson followed Wordsworth in the poetry of simple life. *The Princess* is a contribution to the question of the higher education of

women in the form of a serio-comic fantasy. The thesis explored is the eternal dualism of sex: "Woman is not undeveloped man, but diverse." *In Memoriam* expanded from a personal elegy to a great religious poem. It records the spiritual struggles that followed upon Hallam's death, and sets forth Tennyson's faith in God and immortality. Tennyson brooded over the religious question all his life, which has reflected in many of his poems. Tennyson's three historical plays, *Harold, Becket and Queen Mary* deal with great crises-*k*\ the history of the English people.

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ROBERT BROWNING (1812-89)

Browning's first published poem was the autobiographical *Pauline.* In 1846, he married Elizabeth Barrett, then more popular a poet than Browning himself. Browning had an intense and vigorous personality, a boundless capacity for enjoyment. Sound in body and mind, he was altogether unaffected by the melancholy which accompanied the spiritual upheaval of his age. His robust optimism had its roots in its healthy and happy nature.

Browning takes his stand upon two absolute truths-a spiritual faculty in man which enables him to know spiritual reality, and a spiritual reality that is to be known. These truths are above the intellect. God may be conceived as power, as Wisdom and as

Love. The soul craves divine love and finds it mainly through the God-given faculty of love. This thought of a God of love and the correlative principle of the soul's immortality provide the philosophical grounds of Browning's optimism. Browning's ethical teaching is strenuous and militant. Life is to be met boldly, not evaded; all experience is to be made subservient to individuality and growth.

Browning's views on art correspond completely with these ethical principles. Here again he combines high spirituality with the frankest acceptance of the natural *world; here again he proclaims* that the final *standard of values is to be found, not in* achievement, but in effort and aspiration. Art is subordinate to life and is only valuable so far as it expresses it. The artist is seer and interpreter; he perceives, as the ordinary man does not, the beauty and divine meaning of life.

With his deeply rooted faith in freedom as the essential condition for spiritual growth, Browning was in general terms a Liberal, but his Liberalism was highly individualistic and hostile to Socialism. There is little in the enormous mass of his work that bears upon contemporary social and political questions. -

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fattfsio: an imaginative reconstruction of the life of the famous 16th century physicist.

Strafford: tragedy on the impeachment and condemnation of Charles I's evil counselor *Pippa Passes:* dramatic fantasy based on the ideas of unconscious influence

Dramatic Lyrics; Dramatic Romances; Men and Women; Dramatic Personae: collections of shorter poems containing Browning's best work. All are dramatic in principle. *The Ring and the Book:* a gigantic poem based on an Italian murder case of the 16th century.

The range of Browning's work is enormous and his catholicity is astonishing, yet he worked from within a circle of ideas, and the few great truths that comprised his philosophy of life were repeated again and again throughout his work. Underneath his interest in humanity was an interest in individuality as far as possible removed from the common type. His genius was essentially dramatic, but his attention was always fixed not on action, but on the forces and conflicts of the inner life, which he best expressed in the dramatic monologue. Yet his personae are seldom completely dramatic; they are often spokespersons for his personal views. Even when he persistently dwelt on the ugliness and evil in the world, Browning was trying to affirm that even when life is taken at its worst, the grounds of faith remain unshaken.

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MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822-88)

In Arnold's conception of poetry, the ethical element was important. In his view, a poet should handle "sound subject matter" with "high seriousness." Poetry thus is a criticism of life. This theory of poetry's relation to life is evident in Arnold's poems. However, the gap between theory and praxis widens in Arnold's doctrine of the essential superiority of impersonal poetry over the personal. Schooled in the classical traditions, he argued that in order to keep away from the subject, a poet should choose his subject from the past. However, the subjective element is to be noted in all his major poetic works. Arnold's narrative and dramatic poems include *Sohrab and Rustum,* fashioned closely on the Homeric model. In *Empedocles on Etna,* the personal element encroaches strongly upon the dramatic. In the more personal poems, Arnold's own spiritual struggles and deep realization of the religious upheaval of his age are evident. His mood varies from the utter dejection of *Dover Beach* to the comparative hopefulness of *the Future.* It is characteristic of him that he should be at best in the mood of lament-in *Thyrsis,* mourning the death of Arthur Hugh Clough, and Rugby *Chapel,* mourning the death °f his father.

Arnold's poetry has in a high degree the classic qualities of poise, temperance and reserve, Careful workmanship and dignity of style are technical features. His moral spirit is always noble and his stoicism prevents melancholy from becoming debilitating.

PRE-RAPHAELITES

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was a group of English painters, poets and critics, founded in 1848 by John Everett Millais, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Holman Hunt. The group's intention was to reform art by rejecting what they considered to be the mechanistic approach adopted by the Mannerist artists who followed Raphael and Michelangelo. They

believed that the Classical poses and elegant compositions of Raphael in particular had been a corrupting influence on academic teaching of art. Hence the name "Pre-Raphaelite". In particular they objected to the influence of Sir Joshua Reynolds, the founder of the English Royal Academy of Arts. They called him 'Sir Sloshua', believing that his sloppy technique was a formulaic and cliche form of academic Mannerism. In contrast they wanted to return to the abundant detail, intense colors, and complex compositions of quattrocento Italian and Flemish art.

The Pre-Raphaelites have been considered the first avant-garde movement in art, though they have also been denied that status, because they continued to accept both the concepts of history painting and of 'mimesis', or imitation of nature, as central to the purpose of art. However, the Pre-Raphaelites undoubtedly defined themselves as a reform movement, created a distinct name for their form of art, and published a periodical, *The Germ,* to promote their ideas. Their debates were recorded in the "PreRaphaelite Journal". **Beginnings of the Brotherhood**

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was founded in John Millais' parents' house on Gower Street, London in 1848 At the initial meeting John Everett Millais, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Holman Hunt were present. Hunt and Millais were students at the Royal Academy of Arts. They had previously met in another loose association, a sketching society called the Cyclographic club. Rossetti was a pupil of Ford Madox Brown. He had met Hunt after seeing Hunt's painting *The Eve of St. Agnes,* based on Keats's poem. As an aspiring poet Rossetti wished to develop the links between Romantic poetry and art. By Autumn four more members had also joined to form a seven-strong Brotherhood. These were William Michael Rossetti (Dante Gabriel Rossetti's brother), Thomas Woolner, James Collinson and Frederic George Stephens. Ford Madox Brown was invited to join, but preferred to remain independent. He nevertheless remained

close to the group. Some other young painters and sculptors were also close associates, including Charles Alston Collins, Thomas Tupper and Alexander Munro. They kept the existence of the Brotherhood secret from members of the Royal Academy. Early Doctrines

The Brotherhood's early doctrines were expressed in four declarations: 1. To have genuine ideas to express; 2. To study Nature attentively, so as to know how to express them; 3. To sympathize with what is direct and serious and heartfelt in previous art, to the exclusion of what is conventional and self-parading and learned by rote; 4. And most indispensable of all, to produce thoroughly good pictures and statues.

These principles are deliberately undogmatic, since the PRB wished to emphasise the personal responsibility of individual artists to determine their own ideas and method of depiction. Influenced by Romanticism, they thought that freedom and responsibility were inseparable. Nevertheless, they were particularly fascinated by Medieval culture, believing it to possess a spiritual and creative integrity lost in later eras. This emphasis on Medieval culture was to clash with the realism promoted by the stress on independent observation of nature. In its early stages the PRB believed that the two interests were consistent with one another, but in later years the movement divided in two directions. The realist side was led by Hunt and Millais, while the medievalist side was led by Rossetti and his followers, Edward Burne-Jones and William Morris. This split was never absolute, since both factions believed that art was

Hardy's mind throughout his career as a poet, providing a powerful model for artistic unity and complexity.

Recent critics have praised the self-declared "evolutionary meliorism" of his poems, the ironic stances so often achieved by his powerful psychological insights, and the modernist spareness and roughness of his metrical experiments. His is, quintessentially, a poetry of loss, harsh nostalgia, and the despairing limits of human hope and love. In some respects, Hardy considered himself first and foremost a poet throughout his literary life. Although his poetic reputation may finally come to rest on a handful of powerful lyrics--"Neutral Tones," "Nature's Questioning," "Bereft," "Logs on a Hearth," 'The Convergence of the Twain," and "Afterwards" among them--these are nevertheless poems which helped to define his age and which point in crucial ways toward the poetry of our own millennial century.

W.B.YEATS (1865-1939)

William Butler Yeats was born in Dublin in 1865 to a chaotic, artistic family. His father, a portrait painter, moved the family to London when Yeats was two, and William spent much of his childhood moving between the cold urban landscape of the metropolis and the congenial countryside *of* County Sligo, Ireland, where his mother's parents lived. An aesthete even as a boy, Yeats began writing verse early, and published his first work in 1885. In 1889, Yeats met the Irish patriot, revolutionary, and beauty Maud Gonne. He fell immediately in love with her, and remained so for the rest of his life; virtually every reference to a beloved in Yeats's poetry can be understood as a reference to Maud Gonne. Tragically, Gonne did not return his love, and though they remained closely associated (she portrayed the lead role in several of his plays), they were never romantically

involved. Many years later, Yeats proposed to her daughter--and was rejected again.

Yeats lived during a tumultuous time in Ireland, during the political rise and fall of Charles Stuart Parnell, the Irish Revival, and the civil war. Partly because of his love for the politically active Maud Gonne, Yeats devoted himself during the early part of his career to the Literary Revival and to Irish patriotism, seeking to develop a new religious iconography based on Irish mythology. (Though he was of Protestant parentage, Yeats played tittle part in the conflict between Catholics and Protestants that tore Ireland apart during his lifetime.) He quickly rose to literary prominence, and helped to found what became the Abbey Theatre, one of the most important cultural institutions in Ireland, at which he worked with such luminaries as Augusta Gregory and the playwright John Synge. In 1923, Yeats was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

One of the most remarkable facts about Yeats's career as a poet is that he only reached his full powers late in life, between the ages of 50 and 75. Indeed, after reaching his height, he sustained it up until the very end, writing magnificent poems up until two weeks before his death. The normal expectation is that a poet's powers will fade after forty or fifty; Yeats defied that expectation and trumped it entirely, writing most of his greatest poems--from the crushing power of *The Tower* to the eerie mysticism of the Last Poems--in the years after he won the Nobel Prize, a testament to the force and commitment with which he devoted himself to transforming his inner life into poetry. Because his work straddles the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Yeats is stylistically quite a unique poet; his early work seems curiously modern for the nineteenth century, and his late work often seems curiously unmodern for the 1930s. But Yeats wrote great poems in every decade of his life, and his influence

has towered over the past six decades; today, he is generally regarded as the greatest poet of the twentieth century.

Yeats is the greatest poet in the history of Ireland and probably the greatest poet to write in English during the twentieth century; his themes, images, symbols, metaphors, and poetic sensibilities encompass the breadth of his personal experience, as well as his nation's experience during one of its most troubled times. Yeats's great poetic project was to reify his own life--his thoughts, feelings, speculations, conclusions, dreams--into poetry: to render all of himself into art, but not in a merely confessional or autobiographical manner; he was not interested in the common-place. (The poet, Yeats famously remarked, is not the man who sits down to breakfast in the morning.) His elaborate iconography takes elements from Irish mythology, Greek mythology, nineteenth-century occultism (which Yeats dabbled in with Madame Blavatsky and the Society of the Golden Dawn), English literature, Byzantine art, European politics, and Christian imagery, all wound together and informed with his own experience and interpretive understanding.

His thematic focus could be sweepingly grand: in the 1920s and '30s he even concocted a mystical theory of the universe, which explained history, imagination, and mythology in light of an occult set of symbols, and which he laid out in his book A Vision (usually considered important today only for the light it sheds on some of his poems). However, in his greatest poems, he mitigates this grandiosity with a focus on his own deep feeling. Yeats's own experience is never far from his poems, even when they seem obscurely imagistic or theoretically abstract, and the veil of obscurity and abstraction is often lifted once one gains an understanding of how the poet's lived experiences relate to the poem in question.

essentially spiritual in character, opposing their idealism to the materialist realism associated with Courbet and Impressionism.

In their attempts to revive the brilliance of colour found in quattrocento art, Hunt and Millais developed a technique of painting in thin glazes of pigment over a wet white ground. In this way they hoped that their colours would retain jewel-like transparency and clarity. This emphasis of brilliance of colour was in reaction to the excessive use of bitumen by earlier British artists such as Reynolds, David Wilkie and Benjamin Robert Haydon. Bitumen produces unstable areas of muddy darkness, an effect which the Pre-Raphaelites despised. **Public Controversies**

In 1850 the PRB became controversial after the exhibition of Millais's painting "Christ in the House of His Parents", considered to be blasphemous by many reviewers, notably Charles Dickens. Their medievalism was attacked as backward-looking and their extreme devotion to detail was condemned as ugly and jarring to the eye. According to Dickens, Millais made the Holy Family look like alcoholics and slum-dwellers, adopting contorted and absurd 'medieval' poses. A rival group of older artists, The Clique, also used their influence against the PRB, Thejr principles were publicly attacked *by ike* #fie^ide»t of the Academy, Sir Charles Lock Eastlake.

However, the Brotherhood found support from the critic John Ruskin, who praised their devotion to nature and rejection of conventional methods of composition. He continued to support their work both financially and in his writings.

Following the controversy, Coltinson left the Brotherhood. They met to discus whether he should be replaced by Charles Alston Collins or Walter Howell Deverell, but were unable to make a decision. From that point on the group disbanded, though their influence continued to be felt. Artists who had worked in the style still followed these techniques (initially anyway) but

they no longer signed works "PRB". Later Developments and Influence

Artists who were influenced by the Brotherhood include John Brett, Philip Calderon, Arthur Hughes, Evelyn de Morgan and Frederic Sandys. Ford Madox Brown, who was associated with them from the beginning, is often seen as most closely adopting the Pre-Raphaelite principles.

After 1856 Rossetti, became an inspiration for the medievalising strand of the movement. His work influenced his friend William Morris, in whose firm he became a partner and with whose wife he may have had an affair. Ford Madox Brown and Edward Burne-Jones also became partners in the firm. Through Morris's company the ideals of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood influenced many interior designers and architects, arousing interest in medieval designs, as well as other crafts. The led directly to the Arts and Crafts movement headed by William Morris. Holman Hunt was also involved with this movement to reform design through the Delia Robbia Pottery company.

After 1850, both Hunt and Millais moved away from direct imitation of medieval art. Both stressed the realist and scientific aspects of the movement, though Hunt continued to emphasise the spiritual significance of art, seeking to reconcile religion and science by making accurate observations and studies of locations in Egypt and Israel for his paintings on biblical subjects. In contrast, Millais abandoned PreRaphaeUtism after 1860, adopting a much broader and looser style influencecj by Reynolds. This reversal of principles was condemned by William Morris and others. .

The movement influenced the work of many later British artists well into the twentieth century, Rossetti later came to be seen as a precursor of the wider European Symbolist movement.

In the twentieth century artistic ideals changed and art moved away from representing reality, Since the Pre-Rapaelites

were fixed on portraying things with photographic precision, their work was devalued by critics. Recently there has been a resurgence in interest in the movement, as Postmodernist ideas have challenged modernist values.

i

Poets of the Turn of the Century

THOMAS HARDY **(1840-1928)**

. Hardy saw himself as a poet from the earliest stages of his literary career. Over the course of l)| life he produced over 900 lyrics, many of them occasional, a few of them works of lasting lyrical genius. Hardy wrote poems before his career as an architect and during the entire time he was writing novels as j means of making a literary living. By 1896, hostile reviews of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* artd *Jude* tr| *Obscure,* combined with his own continuing anxieties about the literary value of the novel form, led hi) to abandon novel writing in favor of poetry for the remainder of his life.

His first volume of lyrics, *Wessex Poems,* was not published until 1898, although many of its vers* dated from the 1860s. Early critics faulted Hardy's poems as they had his novels, for their fatalist] pessimism, earthy realism, and abstract philosophizing. He was taken to task for what appeared to be ti repetitious simplicity of many of his lyric forms. He was also accused of writing lyrics that were flawed *I* the pervasiveness of the philosophy that informed them. Gothic architecture loomed in the back i

No poet of the twentieth century more persuasively imposed his personal experience onto history ' by way of his art; and no poet more successfully plumbed the truths contained within his "deep heart's core," even when they threatened to render his poetry cliched or ridiculous. His integrity and passionate commitment to work according to his own vision protect his poems from all such accusations. To contemporary readers, Yeats can seem baffling; he was opposed to the age of science, progress, democracy, and modernization, and his occultist and mythological answers to those problems can seem horribly anachronistic for a poet who died barely sixty years ago. But Yeats's goal is always to arrive at personal truth; and in that sense, despite his profound individuality, he remains one of the most universal writers ever to have lived.

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS (1844-89)

Gerard Manley Hopkins was born in 1844 to devout Anglican parents who fostered from an early age their eldest son's commitment to religion and to the creative arts. His mother, quite well educated for a woman of her day, was an avid reader. His father wrote and reviewed poetry and even authored a novel, though it was never published. Hopkins also had a number of relatives who were interested in literature, music, and the visual arts, some as dabblers and some professionals; he and his siblings showed similarly creative dispositions from an early age, and Hopkins enjoyed a great deal of support and encouragement for his creative endeavours. He studied drawing and music and at one point hoped to become a painter--as, indeed, two of his brothers did. Even his earliest verses displayed a vast verbal talent.

Hopkins was born in Essex, England, in an area that was then being transformed by industrial development. His family moved to the relatively undefiled neighbourhood of Hampstead,

north of the city, in 1852, out of a conviction that proximity to nature was important to a healthy, wholesome, and religious upbringing. From 1854 to 1863 Hopkins attended Highgate Grammar School, where he studied under Canon Dixon, who became a lifelong friend and who encouraged his interest in Keats. At Oxford, Hopkins pursued Latin and Greek. He was a student of Walter Pater and befriended the poet Robert Bridges and Coleridge's grandson. In the 1860s Hopkins was profoundly influenced by Christina Rossetti and was interested in medievalism, the Pre-Raphaelites, and developments in Victorian religious poetry. He also became preoccupied with the major religious controversies that were fermenting within the Anglican Church. Centred at Oxford, the main debate took place between two reform groups: the Tractarians, whose critics accused them of being too close to Catholicism in their emphasis on ritual and church traditions (it was in this culture that Hopkins was reared), and the Broad Church Movement, whose followers believed that all religious faith should be scrutinized on a basis of empirical evidence and logic. Immersed in intense debate over such issues, Hopkins entered into a process of soul-searching, and after much deliberation abandoned the religion of his family and converted to Catholicism. He threw his whole heart and life behind his conversion, deciding to become a Jesuit priest.

Hopkins undertook a lengthy course of training for the priesthood; for seven years he wrote almost no verse, having decided that one who had pledged his life to God should not pursue poetry. Only at the urging of church officials did Hopkins resume his poetry, while studying theology in North Wales, in 1875. He wrote The Wreck of the Deutschland in 1876 and, during the course of the next year, composed many of his most famous sonnets. Hopkins's subject matter in these mature poems is wholly religious--he believed that by making his work religious-themed he might make poetry a part of his religious vocation.

These post-1875 poems follow a style quite different from that of Hopkins's earlier verse. After his ordination in 1877, Hopkins did parish work in a number of locales. He spent the last years of his short life quite unhappily in Dublin, where he wrote a group of melancholy poems often referred to as the "Terrible Sonnets" or "Sonnets of Desolation"; they exquisitely render the spiritual anguish for which Hopkins is famous. The great poet died of typhoid fever in 1877 in Dublin in 1877.

Hopkins is one of the greatest 19th-century poets of religion, of nature, and of inner anguish. In his view of nature, the world is like a book written by God. In this book God expresses himself completely, and it is by "reading" the world that humans can approach God and learn about Him. Hopkins therefore sees the environmental crisis of the Victorian period as vitally linked to that era's spiritual crisis, and many of his poems bemoan man's indifference to the destruction of sacred natural and religious order. The poet harboured an acute interest in the scientific and technological advances of his day; he saw new discoveries (such as the new explanations for phenomena in electricity or astronomy) as further evidence of God's deliberate hand, rather than as refutations of God's existence.

One of Hopkins's most famous (and most debated) theories centres on the concept of "inscape." He coined this word to refer to the essential individuality of a thing, but with a focus not on its particularity or uniqueness, but rather on the unifying design that gives a thing its distinctive characteristics and relates it to its context. Hopkins was interested in the exquisite interrelation of the individual thing and the recurring pattern. He saw the world as a kind of network integrated by divine law and design.

Hopkins wrote most frequently in the sonnet form. He generally preferred the Italian or Petrarchan sonnet, which consists of an octave followed by a sestet, with a turn in argument or chan%e\T\ tone occurring in the second part. Hopkins typically uses the octave to present some account Of personal or sensory experience and then employs the sestet for philosophical reflection. While Hopkins enjoyed the structure the sonnet form imposes, with its fixed length and rhyme scheme, he nevertheless constantly stretched and tested its limitations. One of his major innovations was a new metrical form, called "sprung rhythm." In sprung rhythm, the poet counts the number of accented syllables in the line, but places no limit on the total number of syllables. As opposed to syllabic meters (such as the iambic), which count both stresses and syllables, this form allows for greater freedom in the position and proportion of stresses. Whereas English verse has traditionally alternated stressed and unstressed syllables with occasional variation, Hopkins was free to place multiple stressed syllables one after another (as in the line "All felled, felled, are all felled" from "Binsey Poplars"), or to run a large number of unstressed syllables together (as in "Finger of a tender of, 0 of a feathery delicacy" from Wreck of the Deutschland). This gives Hopkins great control over the speed of his lines and their dramatic effects.

Another unusual poetic resource Hopkins favoured is "consonant chiming," a technique he learned from Welsh poetry. The.technique involves elaborate use of alliteration and internal rhyme; in Hopkins's hands this creates an unusual thickness and resonance. This close linking of words through sound and rhythm complements Hopkins 's themes of finding pattern and design everywhere. Hopkins's form is also characterized by a stretching of the conventions of grammar and sentence structure, so that newcomers to his poetry must often strain to parse his sentences. Deciding which word in a given sentence is the verb,

for example, can often involve significant interpretive work. In addition, Hopkins often invents words, and pulls his vocabulary freely from a number of different registers of diction. This leads to a surprising mix of neologisms and archaisms throughout his lines. Yet for all his innovation and disregard of convention, Hopkins's goal was always to bring poetry closer to the character of natural, living speech.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR VICTORIAN NOVELISTS

In the Victorian novels we see traces of the influences that had affected poetry in the previous half- century. The novels and poems of the Bronte sisters were dominated by a Wordsworthian feeling for nature, a frank consciousness of passion, and a sense of the deeper things that make the poetry of life. They form a link between the older realists and the poetic fiction of Hardy and Meredith. With Mrs. Gaskell and George Eliot the novel once again became realistic and more, philosophical. Both were moralists, and George Eliot's diagnosis of life was deepened by her insight into modern psychology, metaphysics and ethics. In Dickens's novels we see a general awakening of the social consciousness. Characters from the lower classes had hitherto been influenced for the sake of picturesqueness or comic effect; they had now become the central figures of the story. Finally, in the latter part of the 19th century, the development of science began to react powerfully in fiction.

Charles Dickens belonged to the needy lower middle-class which forms the subject of most of his novels. For a time he worked as a reporter of the Morning Chronicle and he supplemented his journalism with studies of life collected as *Sketches by Boz.* His early novel, *The Pickwick Papers,* an account of random rollicking adventure about town, was an immediate success and Dickens remained until his death the most popular and famous of English writers. His other novels, most of which appeared serially in magazines, include *Oliver Twist, Nicholas Nickleby, The Old Curiosity Shop, Barnaby Rudge, Martin Chuzzlewit* (written as a result of Dickens's American visit). A *Christmas Carol, Dombey and Son, David Copperfield, Bleak House, Hard Times, Little Dorrit, A Tale of Two Cities, Great Expectations, Our Mutual Friend,* and the final unfinished Mystery *of Edwin Drood.*

Dickens had the eye of a reporter and his realism touched everything except the private world of upper classes (which was Thackeray's domain) His narratives are thoroughly faithful to the surroundings they depict and are crammed with rich and minute detail. Dickens was an idealist and a dreamer. His imagination often exaggerated the comic side of life. His comic characters however are not mere caricatures and are truly realistic and poetic, representative of certain types. The readers are familiar with their idiosyncracies as well as outward appearances, for Dickens was a brilliant illustrator. His novels overflow with characters - there are 350 in *The Pickwick Papers* - but everyone of them is individually realised.

It was with tenderness and compassion that Dickens portrayed his poor human characters. Sentimentalism is revolting to modern taste, but the readers of Dickens and Thackeray relished it. In their novels we are brought into too real a consciousness of the miseries of existence.

In his prose fiction Dickens emerges as a poet. But he has little patience with the romanticism of Scott. Dickens's poetry is akin to the Wordsworthian poetry of common life. It is expressed in the beauty ' of homeliness, in the grandeur of suffering and in the subjective nature of Dickens's style.

Early **Novels:** *The Pickwick Papers* exhibits Dickens at his most characteristic. His imagination freshly stored with human material culled from his own experiences in London, Dickens worked up the fanciful idea of an eccentric club dispatching four members on a journey of research through town and home counties. The incidents provide excellent farce, but the effect depends upon the immortal characters - Pickwick, Sam Weller, Mrs. Bardell, 'the fat boy* and others.

Oliver Twist relates the fortunes of a workhouse body and gives a truthful picture of the criminal classes. *Nicholas Nickleby* centres around the antagonism of the good Nicholas and his bad uncle, Ralph Nickleby. The strength of the book is in the numerous comic characters and absurd situations, and, as in *Oliver Twist,* Dickens comes forward as a social reformer. The Old Curiosity Shop gives an instance of grim, grotesque humour in the character of the monstrous dwarf Quilp.

Historical **Novels:** *Barnaby Rudge* was a historical tableau of the No-popery riots of 1780. Later Dickens, inspired by Carlyle, wrote a novel of the French revolution, *A Tate of Two Cities,* an impressive melodrama culminating in the famous scene of Sydney Carton's self-immolation at the guillotine.

Middle Novels: *Martin Chuzzlewit* exemplifies Dickens's singular power in creating character. It-provides epitomies of human faults like Mr. Pecksniff, Mark Tapley, Tom Pinch, etc. In *Dombey and Son* pathos is occasionally relieved by humour. The effect of the railways on English life and the changing landscape are the

underlying themes of the novel. This novel has been called "An Autobiography of a steam-engine".

David Copperfield is largely autobiographical. Memories of Dickens's misery and poverty as a young man have inspired especially its early chapters. Mr. Micawber is a highly Dickensian portrayal of his own father. Other memorable characters are Miss Betsey Trotwood, Barkis, the Peggottys, Tommy Tradles, and Uriah Heep. In *Bleak House,* the humorous chronicle of an unending lawsuit is an example of Dickens's amusing but not always effective satire on current abuses.

Later Novels: In *Hard Times* Dickens took up the cause preached by Carlyle and drew a repulsive picture of modem political economy and industrial progress in a hideous manufacturing town run by Gradgrind and Bounderby. Condemned by Macaulay for its "sullen socialism", the novel was not very popular in its day but gained considerable reputation in the 20th century, partly through the admiration of Shaw and Leavis. In *Little Dorrit,* Dickens satirized the cumbersome routine of the Civil service. *Great Expectations* is set in the background of Thames marshes and provides memorable characters like Joe Gargery and Miss Havisham.

William **Makepeace Thackeray** was born in Calcutta and was the first editor of the *Cornhill Magazine.* His early writings did not meet with much success. This included *the Luck of Barry Lyndon,* a masterpiece in the ironic genre inaugurated by Fielding's *Jonathan Wild the Great.* The tide turned with *The Book of Snobs* and *Vanity Fair.*

Thackeray was a reactionary against the Romantic movement; he scoffed the attractive pictures of medieval society and heroism put forward by Scott and his imitators. Like Fielding, he began by satirizing his contemporaries. He shows no affinity to the Romantic poets and was well-read in Augustan literature.

With his zeal for common sense and quick eye for the absurdities of life, Thackeray naturally adopted Fielding's theory of the novel. He was no passive observer like Austen; he stated his views in person. Though Thackeray lacked Fielding's intellectual grip and freedom from sentimentality, he was Fielding's equal in humour; and superior in technique, dialogue and easy narration.

His finest characters were real people to Thackeray, with a life of their own. In this spontaneity of characterization, he was like Scott or Dickens. Thackeray's only philosophy was a wordly common sense, a vague trust in goodness and a belief in the inherent badness of the majority. He had no sense of the beauty of nature or the significance of art, and his psychology was no deeper than his philosophy.

The first of his four great novels was *Vanity Fair* (the others being *Pendennis, Esmond* and *The Newcomes)-a* crowded picture of society during the Napoleonic Wars and the epic of the adventuress Becky Sharp, contrasted with the sweet and tender Amelia.

The Brontes lived most of their lives in a tiny parsonage; their novels are slightly altered versions of their personal stories and their poems are expressions of their personal emotions, especially their feeling for nature.

Charlotte Bronte first wrote *The Professor* which can be regarded as a preliminary study for *Villette,* her fourth novel. Her first published novel *Jane Eyre* is obviously autobiographical, set in romantic circumstances, even to the accompaniments of Gothic Romance. But in this novel, the handsome hero and the beauteous heroine are banished and the love drama becomes an affair of the spirit. The narrative is treated with faithful realism, but with a subjective touch. Interest is centred on the growth of a single personality. *Shirley* takes a wider variety of people drawn

from experience, the story revolves around the home life of a Yorkshire mill-owner who is attacked by rioters in the disturbances caused by the restrictions on trade during

the French war. Like *The Professor, Villette* has its focus on a pupil-teacher relationship, and is based on the author's experiences in Brussels.

Emily Bronte was superior to her sister in sheer imaginative force. Her poems are the finest in the book, *Poems by Currer* (Charlotte), *Ellis* (Emily) *and Acton* (Anne) *Bell. Wuthering Heights,* Emily's only novel, is a strange drama of superhuman passion, hatred and revenge set in the somber Yorkshire moorlands. It is realistic to the place and the people, but the protagonists belong neither to convention nor to realism-they belong to poetry. Heathcliff is a fierce, elemental nature in whom love and revenge pursue their objects even beyond the grave. Yet he and Catherine, his partner in this idealization of human passion, are not mere poetic phantoms, they are individualized both within and without. Like Charlotte's, Emily's work should also be interpreted as spiritual drama. It was not an expression of external life, but of a fuller life she felt surging within herself of an existence beyond the physical.

Charles Kingsley had a zest for social reform and was a controversialist who lost reputation by venturing into the lists against Newman. His first novel, *Yeast,* serialized in *Fraser's Magazine,* is a fierce social pamphlet denouncing poverty, immorality and other abuses. *Alton Locke* is a similar tract giving realistic pictures of the poor in London. *Westward Hoi,* usually treated as his masterpiece, is a national saga of the great days of Elizabeth. *The Heroes* and *The Water Babies* are books for children. *In Two Years Ago,* Kingsley drew a full-length portrait of the "muscular hero." Tom Thurnall is a hard-bitten, powerfully built and self-reliant doctor and a defiant rationalist. He is contrasted with the effeminate poet Briggs. *Hereward the Wake,*

the tale of a Saxon patriot and outlaw, is another "muscular" novel. The same inspiration appears in the novels of **G.A. Lawrence.** The classic of muscular Christianity was *Tom Brown's Schooldays* by Thomas **Hughes.** The gospel of manliness, the felling that the world is a battlefield is eloquently affirmed in this novel. **Wilkie Collins** attacked the muscular school and the popular craze for athleticism in *Man and Wife.*

Charles Reade was another major writer of the period who wrote a few plays and a score of novels including *It's Never Too Late to Mend* and *The Cloister and the Hearth.* The latter is a splendid piece of historical narrative of the Renaissance period, relating the adventurous career of Erasmus's father.

Anthony Trollope wrote two caustic satires-The *Domestic Manners of the Americans* and *The Vicar of Wrexhill.* He also wrote two Irish novels-the *Warden* and *Barchester Towers.* The narrative is characterized by sober realism, quiet humour and a studious avoidance of caricature, sensation or any other distortion of everyday life. Both these novels are portrayals of clerical life.

Besides the delicate charm of her short stories, **Mrs. Gaskell** has the distinction of having pointed out the way for George Eliot to the deliberate analysis of motive and of the secret springs of character. Many of Gaskell's tales are didactic, as of Edgeworth. Her best work is perhaps *Cranford,* which is not a novel but a set of character paintings, with little story, set in a little old-fashioned town chiefly inhabited by widows and old maids living in genteel poverty.

Mary Ann Evans, who wrote under the name **George Eliot,** was initiated into novel writing by the philosophical and critical writer George Henry Lewes, with whom she lived for many years. Her peculiar endowment as a novelist was a thorough grounding

in modern thought and theoretical psychology, and an intimate knowledge of many varieties of human nature acquired through her life among country people. She would have been a heavy didactic novelist but for the humour, which was as profound as her philosophy, and a vital ingredient of her novels.

George Eliot's *Scenes of Clerical Life* was loosely akin to Mrs. Gaskell's studies of actual life; but it went more deeply into the dark recesses of character and the persons are more real. *Adam Bede* is the story of the seduction of a dairymaid by a thoughtless young squire. Remorse and suffering are the consequences. George Eliot's novels illustrate the positivism he learned from Herbert Spencer, on the psychological and ethical side. She also unconsciously acknowledges a spiritual element that has no logical place in her determinism. External events are but outward manifestations of inner life. The deeds of the inner self are decisive factors in human history.

The Mill on the Floss is the tale of a brother and sister in whose history we watch the pathetic conflict of affection and antipathy psychologically paralleled in George Eliot herself and her brother Isaac. The novel is a perfect example of the novelist's power of interpreting human nature dramatically. Si/as *Marner* is a beautiful piece in a minor key and contains all her humanism, pathos and genial comedy. *Romola* is the sternest of all her dramas of temptation, crime and retribution. *Felix Holt* is a special study of the working classes after the Reform Bill and of the militant activities of Radical politicians. *Middlemarch,* one of her finest novels, recaptures Eliot's own Warwickshire memories. It is a bundle of life histories, all enforcing the same moral. The austere philosopher in George Eliot had for a time been an omnipotent influence in English fiction.

It was as a poet that **George Meredith** first appealed to the world and his fiction as well as poetry is the work of a poet.

Meredith conceived life as a tragic-comedy. His humour is bound with his broad,

sympathetic knowledge of life. He Ijated sentimentalism but often gives s pure and delicate romance. Meredith's theory of life is sane and practical, and he trusts in change to bring about social and political advance. He believed in the power of reason and intellect, and hated materialism and faithlessness. Everywhere he recognized progress and ultimate good; he believed in the worth of human fellowship and the duty of service. His novels-include *the Ordeal of Richard Feverel, The Egoist* and *Diana of the Crossways.*

Thomas Hardy's career began with *Desperate Remedies.* Hardy was popular as the Wessex novelist and excels as the interpreter of village life and peasant folk. His most remarkable achievement was perhaps the epic-drama, *The Dynasts.* Other major works are *Under the Greenwood tree, A Pair of Blue Eyes, Far from the Madding Crowd, The Return of the Native, The Trumpet Major, The Mayor of Casterbridge, The Woodlanders, Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure.* He has also written much poetry.

Hardy is most comfortable when dealing with characters and places with which he is familiar. He is not much interested in the middle-class or aristocracy. His peasants are an integral part of the land in which they live. They and their surroundings are described in the greatest possible detail, perfect in beauty and harmony.

Hardy primarily wrote novels of character. There is no adventure or unexpected action, the ending is always predictable... The profound effect of the novels is created by psychological insight and revelation of character. Passions are complex and situations difficult, and solutions depend on modern social conditions as well as fate. Hardy never dealt with commonplace people or ordinary situations. His characters are men and women with mighty emotions and passions; and driven

by impulse and caprice, especially the women, find themselves in strange predicaments from which there is no escape.

Hardy's plots are almost always admirably constructed and have an imaginative unity. His prose style is organically connected to the narrative and rises to its height when the climax of the story is reached.

Critics have tended to disagree to Hardy's fatalism and ethical conclusions. But his self-restraint, constructive power and subtle characterization make him one of the greatest of modern prose writers.

R.L. Stevenson, essayist, novelist and short story writer, rose to eternal fame through works like *Treasure Island, Kidnapped* and *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.* He was a romantic adventurer of robust optimism, which had nothing of the Victorian smugness. Stevenson had an extraordinary power of sound historical reconstruction, sometimes bordering on the archaic.

Some of the other important novelists at the end of the century were **George Gissing, Rudyard Kipling** and **James Barrie.** Gissing had tasted the bitterness of life in poverty and starvation which is reflected in some of his novels. Kipling was born in Bombay and educated in India. His works were characterized by amazing visualizing power and tenderness. He is at his best when dealing with subjects that border on mysticism. Barrie's reputation rests mainly on the Scottish village life, a work begun by Walter Scott and John Gait. He is also the author of *Peter Pan.*

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

TWENTIETH CENTURY POETRY

THE FIRST THREE DECADES

The Victorian era continued into the early years of the 20th century and two figures emerged as the leading representative of the poetry of the old era to act as a bridge into the new. These were Yeats and Thomas Hardy. Yeats, although not a modernist, was to learn a lot from the new poetic movements that sprang up around him and adapted his writing to the new circumstances. Hardy was, in terms of technique at least, a more traditional figure and was to be a *y&M^SJ*f&^r&<&ffi^<£d'(g modernist smtrsiz^ <?*>pi?r7£rdjrt1X7<Tl Cits.* C^IKV^WaSffe*.

The Georgian poets were the first major grouping of the post-Victorian era. Their work appeared in a series of five anthologies called *Georgian Poetry* which were published by Harold Monro and edited by Edward Marsh. The poets featured included Edmund Blunden, Rupert Brooke, Robert Graves, D. H. Lawrence, Walter de la Mare and Siegfried Sassoon. Their poetry represented something of a reaction to the decadence of the 1890s and tended towards the sentimental. Brooke and Sassoon were to go on to win reputations as war poets and Lawrence quickly distanced himself from the group and was associated with the modernist movement.

WORLD WAR I *":;i* |

As already noted, the Georgian poets Rupert Brooke^ and Siegfried Sassoon are now mostly remembered for their war poetry.; Other notable poets who wrote about the war include Isaac Rosenberg, Edward Thomas, Wilfred Owen, May Cannan and, from the home front, Hardy and Rudyard Kipling. Although many of these poets wrote socially aware criticism of the war, most remained technically conservative and traditionalist.

MODERNISM

The early decades of the 20th century saw the United States begin to overtake Britain as the major economic power. In the world of poetry, this period also saw American writers at the forefront of *avant-garde* practices. Among the foremost of these poets were T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, both of whom spent part, and in Eliot's case a considerable part, of their writing lives in England.

Pound's involvement with the Imagists marked the beginning of a revolution in the way poetry was written. British poets involved with this group included D. H. Lawrence, Richard Aldington, T. E. Hulme, F. S. Flint, Ford Madox Ford, Allen Upward and John Cournos. Eliot, particularly after the publication of *The Waste Land,* became a major figure and influence on other British poets.

In addition to these poets, other British modernists began to emerge. These included the London- Welsh poet and painter David Jones, whose first book, *In Parenthesis,* was one of the very few experimental poems to come out of World War I, the Scot Hugh MacDiarmid, Mina Loy and Basil Bunting. **Modernist poetry: features**

The questioning of the self and the exploration of technical innovations in modernist poetry are intimately interconnected. The dislocation of the authorial presence is achieved through the application of such techniques as collage, found poetry, visual poetry, the juxtaposition of apparently unconnected materials, and combinations of these. These techniques are used not for their own sake but to open up questions in the mind of the reader regarding the nature of the poetic experience. These developments parallel changes in the other arts, especially painting and music that were taking place concurrently.

Additionally, Modernist poetry disavowed the traditional aesthetic claims of Romantic poetry's later phase and no longer sought "beauty" as the highest achievement of verse. With this abandonment of the sublime came a turn away from pastoral poetry and an attempt to focus poetry on urban, mechanical, and industrial settings. The new heroes would not be swains labouring in the fields, but office workers struggling across London Bridge, and the new settings would not be "romantic chasms deep and wide," but vacant lots, smoked over cities, and subways.

Another important feature of much modernist poetry in English is a clear focus on the surface of the poem. Much of this work focuses on the literal meaning of the words on the page rather than any metaphorical or symbolic meanings that might be imputed to them. This approach to writing is reflected in Ezra Pound's advice to young writers (in his 1937 book *The ABC of Reading)* to buy a dictionary and learn the meanings of words' and T.S. Eliot's response when ask the meaning of the line 'Lady, three white leopards sat under a juniper tree in the coot of the day...' from *Ash Wednesday* (1927); he said "It means 'Lady, three white leopards sat under a juniper tree in the cool of the day..."'. Also pertinent is William Carlos Williams' 1944 statement that 'A poem is a small (or large) machine made out of words'.

Imagism

The origins of Imagism are to be found in two poems by T. E. Hulme that were published in 1909 by the Poets' Club in London. Hulme was a student of mathematics and philosophy who had set up the Poets' Club to discuss his theories of poetry. The poet and critic F. S. Flint, who was a champion of free verse and modern French poetry, was highly critical of the club and its publications. From the ensuing debate, Hulme and Flint became close friends. They started meeting with other poets at the Eiffel Tower restaurant in Soho to discuss plans to reform contemporary poetry through free verse and the tanka and haiku and the removal of all unnecessary verbiage from poems.

The American poet Ezra Pound was introduced to this group and found that their ideas were close to his own. In 1911, Pound introduced two other poets, H.D. and Richard Aldington, to the Eiffel Tower group-. Both of these poets were students of the early Greek lyric poetry, especially the works of Sappho. In October 1912, he submitted three poems each by H.D. and Aldington under the rubric *Imagiste* to *Poetry* magazine. That month Pound's book *Ripostes* was published with an appendix called *The Complete Poetical Works of T. E. Hulme,* which carried a note that saw the first appearance of the word *Imagiste* in print. Aldington's poems were in the November issue of *Poetry* and H.D.'s in January 1913 and Imagism as a movement was launched. The March issue contained Pound's *A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste* and Flint's *Imagisme.* The latter contained this succinct statement of the group's position:

1. Direct treatment of the "thing", whether subjective or objective.
2. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.

3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of the metronome.

VallathsTES 54

In setting these criteria for poetry, the Imagists saw themselves as looking backward to the best practices of pre-Romantic writing. However, their work was to have a revolutionary impact on English- language writing for the rest of the 20th century.

THE THIRTIES

The poets who began to emerge in the 1930s had two things in common; they had all been born too late to have any real experience of the pre-World War I world and they grew up in a period of social, economic and political turmoil. Perhaps as a consequence of these facts, themes of community, social (in)justice and war seem to dominate the poetry of the decade.

The *New Country* poets

The poetic landscape of the decade was dominated by four poets; W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender, Cecil Day-Lewis and Louis MacNeice, although the last of these belongs at least as much to the history of Irish poetry. These poets were all, in their early days at least, politically active on the Left. Although they admired Eliot, they also represented a move away from the technical innovations of their modernist predecessors. A number of other, less enduring, poets also worked in the same vein. One of these was Michael Roberts, whose *New Country* anthology both introduced the group to a wider audience and gave them their name. Surrealism **and** others •¦--• -...¦•-.'¦••¦¦¦ .,,.....,,,

The 1930s also saw the emergence of a home-grown English surrealist poetry whose main exponents were David Gascoyne, Hugh Sykes DaWes, George Barker, and Philip O'Connor. These poets turned to French models rather than either the *New Country* poets or English-language modernism, and their work

was to prove of importance to later English experimental poets as it broadened the scope of the British *avant-garde* tradition.

John Betjeman and Stevie Smith, who were two of the most significant poets of this period, stood outside all schools and groups. Betjeman was a quietly ironic poet of Middle England with a fine command of a wide range of verse techniques. Smith was an entirely unclassifiabte one-off voice.

THE FORTIES The war poets

The 1940s opened with Brftain at war and a new generation of war poets emerged in response. These included Keith Douglas, Alun Lewis, Henry Reed and F. T. Prince. As with the poets of the First World War, the work of these writers can be seen as something of an interlude in the history of 20th century poetry. Technically, many of these war poets owed something to the 1930s poets, but their work grew out of the particular circumstances in which they found themselves living and fighting. The New Romantics

The main movement in post-war 1940s poetry was the New Romantic group that included Dylan Thomas, George Barker, W. S. Graham, Kathleen Raine, Henry Treece and J. F. Hendry. These writers saw themselves as in revolt against the classicism of the *New Country* poets. They turned to such models as Serard Manley Hopkins, Arthur Rimbaud and Hart Crane and the word play of James Joyce. Thomas, in)articular, helped Anglo-Welsh poetry to emerge as a recognisable force.)ther 1940s poets

Other significant poets to emerge in the 1940s include Lawrence Durrell, Bernard Spencer, Roy uller, Norman Nicholson, Vernon Watkins, R. S. Thomas and Norman McCaig. These last four poets ?present a trend towards regionalism and poets writing about their native areas; Watkins and Thomas in 'ales, Nicholson in Cumberland and McCaig in Scotland.

THE FIFTIES

The 1950s were dominated by three groups of poets, The Movement, The Group and a number of ets that gathered around the label Extremist Art. e Movement

The Movement poets as a group came to public notice in Robert Conquest's 1955 anthology New *es.* The core of the group consisted of Philip Larkin, Elizabeth Jennings, D. J. Enright, Kingsley Amis,)m Gunn and Donald Davie. They were identified with a hostility to modernism and internationalism, I looked to Hardy as a model. However, both Davie and Gunn later moved away from this position. > Group

As befits their name, the Group were much more formally a group of poets, meeting for weekly ussions under the chairmanship of Philip Hobsbaum and Edward Lucie-Smith. Other Group poets jded Martin Bell, Peter Porter, Peter Redgrove, George MacBeth and David Wevill. Hobsbaum spent ? time teaching in Belfast, where he was a formative influence on the emerging Northern Ireland s including Seamus Heaney. Extremist Art poets

The term Extremist Art was first used by the poet A. Alvarez to describe the work of the American poet Sylvia Plath. Other poets associated with this group included Plath's one-time husband Ted Hughes, Francis Berry and Jon Silkin. These poets are sometimes compared with the Expressiomst German school.

THE 1960S AND 1970S

In the early part of the 1960s, the centre of gravity of mainstream poetry moved to Ireland, with the emergence of Seamus Heaney, Tom Paulin, Paul Muldoon and others. In Britain, the most cohesive groupings can, in retrospect, be seen to cluster around what might loosely be called the modernist tradition and draw on American as well as indigenous models.

The British Poetry Revival

The British Poetry Revival was a wide-reaching collection of groupings and subgroupings that embraces performance, sound and concrete poetry as well as the legacy of Pound, Jones, MacDiarmid, Loy and Bunting, the Objectivist poets, the Beats and the Black Mountain poets, among others. Leading poets associated with this movement include J. H. Prynne, Eric Mottram, Tom Raworth, Denise Riley and Lee Harwood.

The Mersey Beat " v •'•'¦ r-.-¦•¦>•

The Mersey Beat poets were Adrian Henri, Brian Patten and Roger McGough. Their work was a self-conscious attempt at creating a British equivalent to the Beats. Many of their poems were written in protest against the established social order and, particularly, the threat of nuclear war. Although not actually a Mersey Beat poet, Adrian Mitchell is often associated with the group in critical discussion.

ENGLISH POETRY NOW

The last three decades of the 20th century saw a number of short-lived poetic groupings such as the Martians. There was a growth in interest in women's writing and in poetry from Britain's ethnic groupings, especially the West Indian community. Poets who emerged include Carol Ann Duffy, Andrew Motion, Craig Raine, Wendy Cope, James Fenton, Blake Morrison, Grace Lake, Liz Lochhead, Linton Kwesi Johnson and Benjamin Zephaniah. There was also a growth in performance poetry fuelled by the Poetry Slam movement. A new generation of innovative poets has also sprung up in the wake of the Revival grouping.

Despite all of this activity, major publishers dropped their poetry lists and both young and established writers became increasingly reliant on small and medium sized presses, generally dependent on State funding. As of 2004, it appears that a still thriving literature is faced with an ever-decreasing audience.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

MODERNIST FICTION

Early modernist literature belongs to a separate phase as distinct from what followed as from what preceded it. This was the age of

James, Wilde and Yeats. Their writing was characterized by formal compression, radical criticism of society and a comprehensive address to tradition. **Thomas Hardy,** although a very great novelist, had little to do with avant-garde movements, and was content to use traditional genres without obvious change. But his novels make at least two fresh departures. First, they set rural values against newer developments, chronicling changes with an evident sympathy for *the* passing order. They express a deep sense of loss set in a tragic mode to a quite un-Victorian extent. Nature *in* them is a relentlessly determining order, which is trifled with at the risk of man's peril.

In *Tess,* for instance, Hardy offers a realization of rural Wessex (Dorset), but without the moral analysis of character. His people have few choices in their helpless struggles with a tragic destiny. Nature, here, is a powerful presence manifested by the strong physicality of fertile meadows and summer fogs as well as by the minutely detailed seasonal round of labours like milking. Hardy's imagination, as illustrated in *Tess,* is strongly visual.

Hardy's novels are poetic-and this is his second departure from the Victorian norm-to the extent that they incorporate description into their thematic structures. Their details are seldom merely realistic, but perform other functions simultaneously. Hardy's

method-simultaneity through concentration- in which everything seems to be multiply connected and contribute at the same time to a single aesthetic effect, was to become highly characteristic of modernism.

In turning to the expatriate American **Henry James,** we approach a commanding figure capable of anticipating much of modernist art. In the course of a long and fascinating development, he mastered the portrayal of a vast gallery of characters. He learned to subdue plot to a secret design and became adept at

realizing place-an element In his work that miraculously grew more convincing. It depended, like all his masterly description, on the precise observation of a visual artist. James's style is effortless, lucid, exact and Inexhaustibly varied. Its concentrated simultaneity makes it unquestionably modernist, yet it may also be considered a lyric transformation.

Mimetic efforts of syntax, such as Thackeray occasionally hazarded and Ateredith strained for, are unparalleled in James. From *The Spoils of Poynton* onwards, he moulds his syntax so that what it signifies grammatically is expressed also by its shape. [To take a simpler instance, in "Everything in Poynton was in the style of Poynton," repetition simulates formally the extreme uniformity being described semantically.] Much of the pleasure of James's style arises from the aptness of this extraordinary accompaniment of meaning. Yet, mimetic syntax counts as only one device. In imagery, texture and proportion, the style is almost equally formidable.

Later in his career James radically altered his fictive method in such a way as to exclude authorial intervention. In fact he introduced two new methods with common results. One is the celebrated method of his greatest novels- *The Wings of the Dove, The Ambassadors* and The *Golden Bowl—where* he presents the entire action from the point of view of characters, especially a sympathetic main character, whose sensibilities filter and colour it. The second method James introduced, at first in *The Other House* and *The Awkward Age,* was the dramatic. This gave dialogue in full but no further narrator or author comment. Both methods had the momentous effect of eliminating the authorial role. This role had been growing more difficult and burdensome as psychoanalysis began to complicate the understanding of motive, and as gaps widened between official morality and aesthetic interests. Both methods, however, increased the appearance at least of ambiguity.

James's tones of life, however easily they may escape moral categorization, remain intensely moral. But when the reliability of the narrator is suspect, as in The *Turn of the Screw, for* example, intractable ambiguity can result.

Ambiguity also arises in James's fiction from its extreme selectivity. He selects 'inwardness' rather than external detail, especially in his later novels. By a device learnt from Hawthorne, he avoids telling his story directly. Instead, he suggests it, and it is the reader's task to piece together a story that squares with the characters' states of consciousness. The gradual apprehension of it is the sense of life itself. James never altogether abandons omniscient narration but he avoids using it to make things unnaturally easy for readers.

The innovations in the works of **Joseph Conrad** made a great impact in this period. Conrad knew very little of the English literary tradition and thought nothing of overturning the regular chronological progression customary in Victorian fiction. But he broke its smooth narrative surface up into fragments.

Conrad's chosen method is to take a plunge to establish a perspective, then of returns in fragmentary flashback, then of new plunges. *Lord Jim* opens with Jim as a water-clerk, but returns to episodes- themselves chopped up-of his early life. Next it carries his story upto the Patna disaster, followed by a leap back in time and the narrative moves on to a hypothetical narration by Marlow (long after Jim has ceased to be a water-clerk). Conrad's method of time-shifts establishes control over every juxtaposition, making all belong to an overall composition like the simultaneously viewed parts of a cubist painting. Such fragmentariness has been related to the impossibility of making sense of the modern world. But in Conrad, almost the reverse is true, although the sense he made was highly skeptical, even nihilistic.

Often, Conrad's juxtapositions explode the grandiosity of mythic pretences-romantic illusions in *Lord Jim,* mystifications of a .onialism in *The Heart of Darkness,* revolutionary politics in The *Secret Agent.* Most elaborately of all, in *Nostromo,* the expected story (of an emergent republic) is broken up for a minute scrutiny that reduces It to the paralysis of despair.

Such montage is only one of many ways in which Conrad made the genre more poetic. A poetic pattern organizes the plan of each of his novels. Thus the shifts of narration are not only designed to generate different viewpoints-they can also make graded series, as when the narrations and inset narrations of narrations in *The Heart of Darkness* take one ever deeper into the dark truths of empire and the story-telling keeps in step with the underlying myth of the Dark Journey. Conrad's external stories have great poetic value; their events and physical properties accumulate deep personal meaning. Besides, the treatments of :olonization and revolution are other centres of concern, such as formation of the soul, personal development through disillusionment or the saving effect of duty.

Conrad's many-faceted novels may not match James's in refinement or precision of meaning, but they lave far more sense of man's political destiny. They partly make up for what they lack of James's)sychological range by their robust grasp of social issues.

The narrative fragmentation that Conrad agonized to invent was practised as a matter of course by **ford** Madox **Ford.** His fragmentary method favoured the capture of fleeting unidentified impressions of urban ife. Ford's most perfect achievement was *The Good Soldier.*

VallathsTES 57

Whereas Ford is currently underrated, H.G. **Wells** has been still more overrated. For although he alked about the future a great deal, Wells was quite unable to move into it artistically.

His literary output ras vast and extremely varied. As a novelist he is perhaps best remembered for his science fiction, which ldudes *The Time Machine, The Invisible Man, The War of the Worlds* and *The First Men in the Moon.* These

combine, in varying degrees, political satire, warnings about the dangerous new powers of science, and the desire to foresee a possible future.

Another group of Wells's novels evoke a comic and realistic style and the lower middle class world of his youth. These include *Love and Mr. Lewisham,* Kipps and *The History of Mr. Polly.* Among his other novels, *Ann Veronica* is a feminist tract about a girl who, fortified by the concept of the 'New Woman,' defies her father and conventional morality by running off with the man she loves. *Tono Bungay,* one of his most successful works, is a picture of English society in dissolution, and of the advent of a new class of rich, embodied in Uncle Ponderevo, an entrepreneur intent on peddling a worthless patent machine.

James Joyce is rare among experimentalists in having both creative and intellectual ability, great enough not only to justify his innovations, but even to give them authority. Yet, in his early stories, experimentation makes little show; only after he left Ireland in search of artistic freedom did he develop his brilliant cosmopolitan style. Joyce saw beyond the limitations of the whole tradition of the novel-its formal conventions and its customary moral subject matter-so that he could not only treat additional topics in new ways (like Conrad) but try to reshape fictional reality 'all round'. *Ulysses* is a prodigious effort of realism-but realism metamorphosed. It is informed by a doctrine of 'epiphanies' or spiritual manifestations, whereby the 'thisness' of ordinary life may be illuminated by some fleeting event ('a shout in the street'): a visionary moment to be recorded as a self-contained artistic 'impression.' Joyce preferred to focus on the very ordinary life and raise the magnifying power in such a way as to give many vulgar details previously omitted from fiction-a riot of half-formulated thoughts and half-conscious impulses so multitudinous that the mere sketch of a single day's non-events occupies a large book!

Instead of moral elevation, Joyce's characters are validated by their mythic representativeness. It can have moving effects-as in the Stephen-Telemachus's search for a father, and discovery of one in the ordinary Bloom-Ulysses. In order to evoke the order of myth, *Ulysses* partly follows the conventions of Homeric epic, besides alluding to other genres through a series of stylistic modulations. This method of pastiche encourages the reader to think in terms of literary composition rather than direct reflection of reality. The novel teems with structural patterns listing names and things so as to communicate order, completeness and unity. Its aim is to realize a transcultural view of society, a vision of the human city.

In *Finnegans Wake,* Joyce is more arduously experimental: radically changing the scale of fiction, he extends its range to the cosmic in content, in form to the single word or even syllable. It abandons narrative successiveness, it subverts the Aristotelian sequence of beginning, middle and end, and it frustrates even one's expectation of a connected chain of discourse within the sentence. Stylistically, it represents an extreme of expressionism pushed beyond grammar. Its opaque language forces its reader into a conscious intellectual participation very unlike the imaginative identification usual with the traditional novel.

From Joyce's experiments, there followed a whole tradition of fabulations (antinovels) and metafiction, or self-conscious fiction, acknowledging its own artefactual nature.

Virginia Woolf lacked Joyce's large intellectuality; yet in her conception of the novel she extended modernist freedoms. Woolf's experiments pursued an overtly lyric form of novel. She gradually developed a method whereby stream-of-consciousness constituted almost the entire fiction-as in *Mrs. Dalloway, where* the slender narrative of such actions as a walk through London serves mainly to provide material, in the form of sensitive impressions, for association of ideas. In *The Waves,* even this

amount of external narrative is set aside and the scraps of story have to be inferred from a set of interior monologues.

Woolf considered man's consciousness to be a stream of delicate transitory apprehensions. She saw how life may be represented in its contingencies and intensities, not by imposing on it the significant chronicle of plot, but by recreating its ordinary moments poetically, using the stream-of-consciousness technique. A myriad impressions are in this way composed into a satisfying poetic order, with extreme narrative economy and a style that is lucid.

Independently, **Dorothy Richardson** was also using the stream-of-consciousness method; although to laborious, unimaginative effect. But its most creative and powerful exponent, apart from Joyce, *was the* Mississippi novelist **William Faulkner.** In *As I Lay Dying,* the method's constraints might seem *to have* narrowed the focus to the point of hypnotic monotony. In *The Sound and the Fury,* no fewer than four discontinuous interior monologues open perspectives on the decline of the Compson family, in such a way that the reader must extrapolate much of the story. The success of the novel is partly due to the dependability of Faulkner's setting-the Yoknapatawpha county. Yoknapatawpha's history is a gloomy one, of guilt, disgrace and death, the fall of old families and the rise of new. In Faulkner's vision, values are tragically at loggerheads-evil is often bound up with innocence itself.

D.H. Lawrence had intuitive penetration in treating unconscious motives; perhaps also in arriving at mysterious truths about men and (less often) women. Even his most successful novels are marred by prophetic intrusions of the novelist. In this Lawrence reverted to the looser Victorian novel, with its authorial interventions.

Lawrence's attempts to explore the female psyche and to imagine women's erotic experience were extremely courageous.

His quest for a stance free from what he considered defects of civilized life has something of nobility.

VallathsTES 58

D.H. Lawrence was one of the five sons of a miner. He was often ill as a child and grew up in poverty. His parents quarrelled continually, and a passionate bond grew between Lawrence and his mother; she was determined to keep him out of the mines and encouraged him at school. This love for his mother had a crucial effect on his early life and work. In his youth he formed a close friendship with Jessie Chambers, a local farmer's daughter, the Miriam in *Sons and Lovers.* His first work *Sons and Lovers* is a faithful autobiographical account of his youthful years, though he was later to think he had been unjustly harsh about his father.

Lawrence eloped with Frieda Weekley, who was six years older than him and the mother of three children. They were always on the move, always short of money, and their life together was passionate and stormy. His next novel The *Rainbow* was seized by the police and declared obscene. Lawrence's other novels include *Women in Love, Aaron's Rod, Kangaroo* and *The Plumed Serpent.* His last novel was *Lady Chatterley's Lover* which attracted more opposition than *The Rainbow.*

It is difficult now to understand the outrage occasioned by Lawrence's work which blinded many readers to its lasting value. He was a moralist, and at his worst, a preacher; he believed that modern man was in danger of losing his ability to experience the quality of life. Passionately involved with his characters and the physical world of nature, he wrote of them with a fresh immediacy and vividness. Lawrence also won reputation as a short story writer and a writer of travel books. In his poems he wanted to be free of the weight of formalism. At times uneven, his poetry always had the immediate and personal quality of his prose.

As the century advanced into the '30s, along with the writers of experimental fiction (like Joyce and Woolf), writers like Elizabeth Bowen and Willa Cather (in the US) continued to produce more or less traditional novels, complete with

continuous narratives, plots and thematic structures. By this time, serious novelists became markedly easier to read, and therefore more popular. Perhaps experimental fiction was felt to be a wrong turning because intelligible presentation of society is an enduring requirement. In short, this phase- called 'popular modernism'-was not modernist on the surface. Its inheritance from modernism amounted to little more than a sense of freedom in changing the proportions of the traditional novel.

The most obvious change of proportion, seen in many writers, was to make character less prominent. The focus is now shifted from the individual to the community, in such a way as to stereotype the characters and subject them to incidents illustrative of social forces. In America, Don Passos attempted the 'collective novel' and used a discontinuous narrative by interweaving many lives of contrasted fortune.

Henry Green seems on the surface to unfold a realistic plot, but underneath he is an abstract experimental artist. He uses plot merely as a pretext for language games that question ordinary formulations of reality.

The recoil from experiment is pronounced in the novels of **Anthony Powell.** His novels are leisurely, elaborate books replete with minute, pleasurably accurate details which offer a rich sampling of social atmospheres.

Throughout **Graham Greene's** impressive oeuvre-more than 20 novels and 'entertainments'-a principal strength is his brilliant topical realism. Yet this realism is problematic in that it does not seem to issue from a sense of historical change-it often receives no identification in sociological or political terms. His range as a writer is wide, and his preoccupation with moral dilemma (personal, religious and political) give his work a highly distinctive and recognizable quality, while his skilful variations of popular forms (the thriller, the detective story) have brought him a rare combination of critical and popular attention. Greene's works

include *Power and Glory, The Heart of the Matter, The Quiet American* (set in Vietnam), *A Burnt-Out Case* (set in a leper-colony in Congo), rhe *Honorary Consul* (set in Argentina), etc.

SECTION TWO

LITERARY THEORY

A QUICK VIEW

NEW CRITICISM

Introduction

New Criticism is an approach to literature which was developed by a group of American critics, most of whom taught at southern universities during the years following the first World War. The New Critics wanted to avoid impressionistic criticism, which risked being shallow and arbitrary, and social/ historical approaches which might easily be subsumed by other disciplines. Thus, they attempted to systematize the study of literature, to develop an approach which was centered on the rigorous study of the text itself. They were given their name by John Crowe Ransom, who describes the new American formalists in *The New Criticism* (1941).

f **New Critical formalism**

New Criticism is distinctly formalist in character. It stresses close attention to the internal characteristics of the text itself, and it discourages the use of external evidence to explain the work. The method of New Criticism is foremost a close reading, concentrating on such formal aspects as rhythm, meter, theme, imagery, metaphor, etc. The interpretation of a text shows that these aspects serve to support the structure of meaning within the text.

The aesthetic qualities praised by the New Critics were largely inherited from the critical writings of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Coleridge was the first to elaborate on a concept of the poem as a unified, organic whole which reconciled its internal conflicts and achieved some final balance or harmony.

In *The Well-Wrought Urn* (1947), Cleanth Brooks integrates these considerations into the New Critical approach. In interpreting canonical works of poetry, Brooks constantly analyzes the devices with which they set up opposing these and then resolve them. Through the use of "ironic contrast" and "ambivalence", the poet is able to create internal paradoxes which are always resolved. Under close New Critical analysis, the poem is shown to be a hierarchical structure of meaning, of which one correct reading can be given.

The heresy **of paraphrase**

Although the New Critics do not assert that the meaning of a poem is inconsequential, they reject approaches which view the poem as an attempt at representing the "real world." They justify the avoidance of discussion of a poem's content through the doctrine of the "Heresy of Paraphrase," which is also described in *The Well-Wrought Urn.* Brooks asserts that the meaning of a poem is complex and precise, and that any attempt to paraphrase it inevitably distorts or reduces it. Thus, any attempt to say what a poem means is heretical, because it is an insult to the integrity of the complex structure of meaning within the work.

The **intentional and affective fallacies**

In *The Verbal Icon* (1954), William Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley describe two other fallacies which are encountered in the study of literature.

The "Intentional Fallacy" is the mistake of attempting to understand the author's intentions when interpreting a literary work. Such an approach is fallacious because the meaning of a work should be contained solely within the work itself, and attempts to understand the author's intention violate the autonomy of the work.

The "Affective Fallacy" is the mistake of equating a work with its emotional effects upon an audience. The new critics believed that a text should not have to be understood relative to the responses of its readers; its merit (and meaning) must be inherent.

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The New Critics' **preference for poetry**

The New Critics privileged poetry over other forms of literary expression because the saw the poem as the purest exemplification of the literary values which they upheld. However, the techniques of \ close reading and structural analysis of texts have also been applied to fiction, drama, and other literary \ forms. These techniques remain the dominant critical approach in many modern literature courses.

New Criticism Occurred **Partially in Response To:**

- Biographical Criticism that understood art primarily as a reflection of the author's Ufe (sometimes to the point that the texts themselves weren't even readl).
- Competition for dollars and students from sciences in academia. j
- New forms of mass literature and literacy, an increasingly consumerist society and the increasingly visible role of commerce, mass media, and advertising In people's lives.

New Criticism Tends to Emphasize:]

- The text as an *autotelic* artifact, something complete with in Itself, written for Its own sake, unified in its form and not dependent on its relation to the author's life or Intent, history, oi anything else.
- The formal and technical properties of work of art.

New Critical Assumptions:

- The critic's job is to help us appreciate the technique and form of art and the mastery of th artist.
- That the "Western tradition" is an unbroken, internally consistent set of artistic conventions an traditions going

back to ancient Greece and continuing up to this day, and that good a participates in and extends these traditions. Similarly, criticism's job Is to uphold these traditioi and protect them from encroachments from commercialism, political posturing, and vulgarity.

- That there are a finite number of good texts (a notion now often tied to "the canon" of te> traditionally taught). The closer that a text comes to achieving an ideal unity, where ea element contributes to an overall effect, the more worthy it is of discussion.
- Studying literature Is an intrinsically edifying process. It hones the sensibilities and discriminatl of students and sets them apart from the unreflective masses.
- That "cream rises," and works of genius will eventually be "vindicated by posterity."
- That there is a firm and fast distinction between "high" art and popular art.
- That good art reflects unchanging, universal human issues, experiences, and values.
- Technical definitions and analyses are vital to understanding literature. The text's relationshij a world that extends beyond it is of little interest.

Critics Associated With It

John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren, and Cleanth Brooks. New Critics also freque

looked to the work and criticism of T.S. Eliot and the essays of Matthew Arnold for inspiration.

Criticisms Sometimes **Made of New Criticism:**

- That its emphases on technique, unity of effect, and the autotelic status of art works best oi lyric poem, but has

problems with larger, more historically recent forms like the novel.

- That it makes the Western tradition out to be more unified than it Is by ignoring diversity contradictory forces within it, and more monadic than it is by Ignoring the exchange bet non-western and western cultures (Aristotle, for instance, central to new critical concepts introduced to medieval Europe via the Islamic world).
- That artistic standards of value are variable and posterity is fickle. Particular pieces of a viewed as important because they do important cultural work, represent values that segme the culture (say editors and English professors) believe are of vital import, or help us unde our history.
- That the values New Critics celebrated were neither unchanging nor universal, but ii reflected their own, historically and experientially specific concerns, values and ambitions.
- That context is just as important as form to understanding a work of art.

FORMALISM

Formalism in the broadest sense refers to a type of criticism that emphasizes the "form" of a text rather than its content. Formalist critics also tend to eschew discussion of any elements deemed external to the text itself (history, politics, biography).

More narrowly, Formalism refers to the critics and theorists working in Russia (actually, the Soviet Union) in the 1910s and 1920s. Major figures include **Victor Shklovsky** *(Theory of Prose),* Boris Eichenbaum *(Theory of the Formal Method),* Vladimir Propp *(Morphology of the Folktale),* Yuri Tynianov ("On Literary Evolution"), and Roman Jakobson ("Linguistics and Poetics"). **Mikhail Bakhtin** is often inappropriately lumped in with the Russian Formalists, but he has more in common with historicist and cultural approaches.

Russian Formalists emphasized the "literariness" of artistic texts, which they found in the linguistic and structural features of literature (as opposed to its subject matter). For example, Victor Shklovsky, in his famous essay "Art as Technique," offers his notion of **defamiliarization** as the defining feature of literary texts. Art takes that which is familiar and "makes it strange," slowing down the act of perception and making the reader see the world in new ways (think, for example, of how Cubist painting changes our perception of everyday objects and forces the viewer to work to reconstruct the image).

The Formalists also introduced the distinction between what they called "syuzhet" and "fabula"-- roughly translated as "discourse" and "story"--that is, the distinction between the abstract storyline (fabula) and the virtually infinite number of

ways in which that story can be "plotted" (discourse). The Formalists, understandably enough, often emphasized those texts that had complex, sophisticated, and often self-reflexive plots and language, features that flaunt their "literariness" *(Tristram Shandy,* the *Quixote,* Nikolai Gogol's *skaz* narration, etc.).

The Russian Formalists were among the first to bring a scientific approach to literary analysis and influenced other movements such as the Prague Linguistic Circle and Structuralism, and their work has many affinities with New Criticism and the Chicago School of critics. While many have criticized some formalists' unwarranted exclusion of history and context from literary analysis, their sophisticated insights into the workings of narrative have been invaluable to a wide variety of critics and theorists, particularly those working in narrative theory.

STRUCTURALISM

Structuralism is an intellectual movement which began in France in the 1950s and is first seen in the work of the anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss (1908-). Its essence is the belief that things cannot be understood in isolation-they have to be seen in the context of the larger structures they are part of (hence the term 'structuralism'). Structuralism was imported into Britain mainly in the 1970s and attained widespread influence throughout the 1980s.

Strongly believes that meaning or significance isn't a kind of core or essence *inside* things: rather, meaning is always *outside.* Meaning is always an attribute of things, in the literal sense that

meanings are *attributed* to the things by the human mind, not contained within them.

In the structuralist approach to literature there is a constant movement away from the interpretation of the individual literary work and a parallel drive towards understanding the larger, abstract structures which contain them. These structures are usually abstract such as the notion of the literary or the poetic, or the nature of narrative itself, rather than There' concrete specifics like the history of a particular genre or tradition. The arrival of structuralism in Britain and the USA in the 1970s caused a great deal of controversy, precisely because literary studies in these countries had traditionally had very little interest in large abstract issues of the kind structuralists wanted to raise. The so-called 'Cambridge revolution' in English studies in the 1920s (New Criticism) had promulgated *the opposite* to all this: it enjoined close study of the text in isolation from all wider structures and contexts: it was relentlessly 'text-based' and tended to exclude wider questions, abstract issues, and ideas. Structuralism in that sense turned English studies on its head, and devalued all that it had held dear for around half a century, asking long-repressed questions such as: 'What do we mean by "literary"?' 'How do narratives work?' 'What *is* a poetic structure?'

Saussurean Theory

Structuralism has its roots in the thinking of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913). Saussure was a key figure in the development of modern approaches to language study. In the nineteenth century linguistic scholars had mainly been interested in historical aspects of language (such as working out the historical development of languages and the connections between them, and speculating about the origins of language itself). Saussure concentrated instead on the patterns and functions of language in

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use today, with the emphasis on how meanings are maintained and established and on the functions of grammatical structures.

Saussure's observations on linguistic structures can be summarized as three pronouncements in particular. Firstly, he emphasised that the meanings we give to words are purely *arbitrary,* and that these meanings are maintained by convention only. Words, that is to say, are 'unmotivated signs,' meaning that there is no inherent connection between a word and what it designates. The word 'hut,' for instance, is not in any way 'appropriate' to its meaning, and all linguistic signs are arbitrary like this (There is the minor exceptions of a small number of onomatopoeic words like 'cuckoo' and 'hiss,' but even these vary between languages.). Insisting that linguistic signs are arbitrary is a fairly obvious point to make, perhaps, and it is not a new thing to say (Plato said it in Ancient Greet times), but it is a new concept to emphasise (which is always much more important), and the structuralists were interested in the implication that if language as a sign system is based on arbitrariness of this kind then it follows that language isn't a reflection of the world and of experience, but a system which stands quite separate from it.

Secondly, Saussure emphasised that the meanings of words are (what we might call) *relational.* That is to say, no word can.be defined in isolation from other words. The definitionijof,any given..word depends upon its relation with other 'adjoining' words. For example, that word 'hut' depends for its precise meaning on its position in a 'paradigmatic chain,' that is, a chain of words related in function and meaning each of which could be substituted for any of the others in a given sentence. The paradigmatic chain in this case might include the following: Hovel shed hut house mansion palace

The meaning of any one of these words would be altered if any one of the others were removed from the chain. Thus, 'hut' and 'shed' are both small and basic structures, but they are not quite the same thing: one is primarily for shelter (a night-watchman's hut, for instance), while the other is primarily for storage: without the other, each would have to encompass *both* these meanings, and hence would be a different word. Likewise, a mansion can be defined as a dwelling which is bigger and grander than a mere house, but not as big and grand as a palace. Thus, we define 'mansion' by explaining how its meaning relates to that of the two words on either side of it. It we have paired opposites then this mutually defining aspect of words is even more apparent: the terms 'male' and 'female,' for example, mainly have meaning in relation to each other: each designates the absence of the characteristics included in the other, so that 'male' can be seen as mainly meaning 'not female,' and vice versa. Similarly, we could have no concept of 'day' without the linked concept of 'night,' no notion of 'good' without a 'bad' to define it against. This 'relational' aspect of language gave rise to a famous remark of Saussure's: 'In a language there are only differences, without fixed terms.' All words, then, exist in 'differencing networks,' like these 'dyads,' or paired opposites, and like the paradigmatic chain of 'dwelling place' words given earlier.

Saussure used a famous example to explain what he meant by saying that there are no intrinsic fixed meanings in language-the example of the 8.25 Geneva to Paris express train. What is it that gives this train its identity? It isn't anything material, since each day it will have a different engine and carriages, different drivers and passengers, and so on. If it is late, it won't even leave at 8.25. Does it even have to be a train? I once asked at Southampton station for the Brighton train, and the ticket collector pointed to a bus standing outside the station and said,

'That's it.' It was a Sunday, and because of engineering works on the line a bus service was being used to ferry passengers beyond the sections being worked upon. Sometimes, then, a 'train' *doesn't* have to be a train. Saussure's conclusion is that the only thing which gives this train its identity is its position in a structure of differences: if comes *between* the 7.25 and the 9.25, that is, its identity is purely relational.

Thirdly, for Saussure, language constitutes our world; it doesn't just record it or label it. Meaning is always *attributed* to the object or idea by the human mind, and constructed by and expressed through language: it is not already contained within the thing. Well-known examples of this process would be the choice between paired alternatives like 'terrorist' or 'freedom fighter.' There is no neutral or objective way of designating such a person, merely a choice of two terms which 'construct' that person in certain ways. It has been said that there are three versions of every story, your version, my version and the truth, but the case here is more complicated than that, since *all* the available terms are purely linguistic-there is no truth about these matters which exists securely outside language.

Wherever we look, we see language constituting the world in this way, not just reflecting it. For instance, the words for colours *make* a reality; they don't just name things which are 'there': the spectrum isn't divided into seven primary colours; all the colours merge into one another. So we might have had fourteen names rather than seven. Another example is the terms we give to the seasons of the year. We have four distinct names ('spring,' 'summer,' etc.), but actually the year runs continuously without any breaks or decisive changes. It isn't, in reality, divided into four. Why not have six seasons, or eight? Since change is continuous throughout the year the divisions could be made anywhere at all. The seasons, then, are a *way of seeing* the year, not an objective fact of nature. So Saussure's

thinking stressed the way language is arbitrary, relational, and constitutive, and this way of thinking about

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language greatly influenced the structuralists, because it gave them a model of a system which is self- contained, in which individual items relate to other items, and thus create larger structures. I One oth

parole to signify, respectively, language as a system or structure on the one hand, and any given utterance in that language on the other. A particular remark in French (a sample of *parole)* only makes sense to you if you are already in possession of the whole body of rules and conventions governing verbal behaviour which we call 'French' (that is, the *langue).* The individual remark, then, is a discrete item which only makes sense when seen in relation to a wider containing structure, in the classic structuralist manner. Now, structuralists make use of the *langue I parole* distinction by seeing the individual literary work (the novel *Middlemarch,* let's say) as an example of a literary *parole.* It too only makes sense in the context of some wider containing structure. So the *langue* which relates to the *parole Middlemarch* is the notion of the novel as a genre, as a body of literary practice.

The Scope of Structuralism

But structuralism is not just about language and literature. The anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss applied the structuralist outlook to the interpretation of myth. He suggested that the individual tale (the *parole)* from a cycle of myths did not have a separate and inherent meaning but could only be understood by considering its position in the whole cycle (the *langue)* and the similarities and difference between that tale and others in the sequence.

This is the typical structuralist process of moving from the particular to the general, placing the individual work within a wider structural context. A signifying system in this sense is a very wide concept: it means any organised and structured set of

signs which carries cultural meanings. Included in this category would be such diverse phenomena as: works of literature, tribal rituals (a degree ceremony, say, or a rain dance), fashions (in clothing, food, 'life-style,' etc.), the styling of cars, or the contents of advertisements. For the structuralist, the culture we are part of can be 'read' like a language, using these principles, since culture is made up of many structural networks which carry significance and can be shown to operate in a systematic way.

The other major figure in the early phase of structuralism was Roland Barthes, who applied the structuralist method to the general field of modern culture. He examined modern France (of the 1950s) from the standpoint of a cultural anthropology in a book called *Mythologies* (1957). This looked at a host of items which had never before been subjected to intellectual analysis, such as: the difference between boxing and wrestling; the significance of eating steak and chips; a magazine photograph of an Algerian soldier saluting the French flag. Each of these items he placed within a wider structure of values, beliefs, and symbols as the key to understanding it. Thus, boxing is seen as a sport concerned with repression and endurance, as distinct from wrestling, where pain is flamboyantly displayed. Clearly, these two sports have quite different functions within society: boxing enacts the stoical endurance which is sometimes necessary in life, while wrestling dramatises ultimate struggles and conflicts between good and evil. Barthes's approach here, then, is that of the classic structuralist.

Structuralist Criticism

In the structuralist view, what had been called a literary "work" becomes a "text"; that is, a mode of writing constituted by a play of component elements according to specifically literary conventions and codes. These factors may generate an

illusion of reality, but have no truth-value, nor even any reference to a reality existing outside the literary system itself.

The individual author, or *subject,* is not assigned any initiative, expressive intentions, or design as the "origin" or producer of a work. Instead the conscious "self" is declared to be a construct that is itself the product of the workings of the linguistic system, and the mind of an author is described as an imputed "space" within which the impersonal, "always-already" existing system of literary language, conventions, codes, and rules of combination gets precipitated into a particular text. Roland Barthes expressed, dramatically, this subversion of the traditional humanistic view, "As institution, the author is dead".

Structuralism replaces the author by the reader as the central agency in criticism; but the traditional reader, as a conscious, purposeful, and feeling individual, is replaced by the impersonal activity of "reading," and what is read is not a work imbued with meanings, but *ecriture,* writing. The focus is structuralist criticism, accordingly, is on the impersonal process of reading which, by bringing into play the requisite conventions, codes, and expectations, makes literary sense of the sequence of words, phrases, and sentences that constitute a text.

POST-STRUCTURALISM

Post-structuralism emerged in France in the late 1960s. The two figures most closely associated with this emergence are Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida. 'The Deathof the Author' (1968) is the 'hinge' around which Barthes turns from structuralism to post-structuralism. In that essay he announces the death of the author, which is a rhetorical way of asserting the independence of the literary text. The essay makes a declaration of radical textual independence: the work is not determined by intention, or context. Rather, the text is free by its very nature of all such restraints. Hence, as Barthes says in the essay, the corollary of the death of the author is the birth of the reader. The early phase *of* post-structuralism seems to license and revel in the endless free play of meanings and the escape from all forms of textual authority. Later there is an inevitable shift from this textual permissiveness to the more disciplined and austere textual republicanism suggested by Barbara Johnson.

The second key figure in the development of post-structuralism in the late 1960s is the philosopher Jacques Derrida. Indeed, the starting point of post-structuralism may be taken as his 1966 lecture 'Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences.' In this paper Derrida sees in modern times a particular intellectual 'event' which constitutes a radical break from past ways of thought, loosely associating this break with the philosophy of Nietzsche and Heidegger and the psychoanalysis of Freud. The event concerns the 'decentring' of our intellectual universe. Prior to this event the existence of a norm or centre in all things was taken for granted: thus 'man,' as the Renaissance slogan had it, was the measure of all other

things in the universe: white Western norms of dress, behaviour, architecture, intellectual outlook, and so on, provided a firm centre against which deviations, aberrations, variations could be detected and identified as 'Other' and marginal. In the twentieth century, these centres were destroyed or eroded; sometimes this was caused by historical events-such as the way the First World War destroyed the illusion of steady material progress, or the way the Holocaust destroyed the notion of Europe as the source and centre of human civilization; sometimes it happened because of scientific discoveries-such as the way the notion of relativity destroyed the ideas of time and space as fixed and central absolutes; and sometimes, finally, it was caused by intellectual or artistic revolutions-such as the way modernism in the arts in the first thirty years of the century rejected such central absolutes as harmony in music, chronological sequence in narrative, and the representation of the visual world in art.

In the resulting universe there are no absolutes or fixed points, so that the universe we live in is 'decentred' or inherently relativistic. Instead of movement or deviation from a known centre, all we have is 'free play.' In the lecture Derrida embraces this decentred universe of free play as liberating, just as Barthes in 'The Death of the Author' celebrates the demise of the author as ushering in an era of joyous freedom. Derrida's rise to prominence was confirmed by the publication of three books by him in the following year (translated as Speech *and Phenomena, Of Grammatology,* and *Writing and Difference).* All of these books are on philosophical rather than literary topics, but Derrida's method always involves the highly detailed 'deconstructive' reading of selected aspects of other philosophers' works, and these deconstructive methods have been borrowed by literary critics and used in the reading of literary works. Essentially, the deconstructive reading of literary texts tends to make them emblems of the decentred universe.

Texts previously regarded as unified artistic artefacts are shown to be fragmented, self-divided, and centreless. They always turn out to be representative of the 'monstrous births' predicted at the end of 'Structure, Sign, and Play.'

Some Theoretical Differences between Structuralism and Post-structuralism

Post-structuralists accuse structuralists of not following through the implications of the views about language on which their intellectual system is based. One of structuralism's characteristic views is the notion that language doesn't just reflect or record the world: rather, it shapes it, so that how we see is what we see. The post-structuralist maintains that the consequences of this belief are that we enter a universe of radical uncertainty, since we can have no access to any fixed landmark which is beyond linguistic processing, and hence we have no certain standard by which to measure anything. Without a fixed point of reference against which to measure movement you cannot tell whether or not you are moving at all. Post-structuralism says that fixed intellectual reference points are permanently removed by properly taking on board what structuralists said about language. This situation, of being without intellectual reference points, is one way of describing what post-structuralists call the decentred universe, one in which, by definition, we cannot know where we are, since all the concepts which previously defined the centre, and hence also the margins, have been 'deconstructed,' or undermined.

The characteristic concerns of post-structuralism may at first seem pretty remote. But on reflection we may find that it is precisely on this matter of anxiety about language that we can most easily identify with post-structuralist concerns, for these anxious feelings seem remarkably pervasive whenever we have to use language at any level beyond that of casual daily exchange

with people we know very well and whose status is the same as our own. For instance, think of any slightly less

straightforward language situation, like writing to your bank, writing an essay, striking up a friendship with a stranger at a party, *or* sending a letter of condolence. In these cases, and many more, there is an almost universally felt anxiety that language will express things we hadn't intended, or convey the wrong impression, or betray our ignorance, callousness, or confusion.

1. *Origins.* Structuralism derives ultimately from linguistics. Linguistics is a discipline which has always been inherently confident about the possibility of establishing objective knowledge. Structuralism inherits a confidently scientific outlook: believes in method, system, and reason as being able to establish reliable truths.

   By contrast, post-structuralism derives ultimately from philosophy. Philosophy is a discipline which has always tended to emphasise the difficulty of achieving secure knowledge about things. This point of view is encapsulated in Nietzsche's famous remark- 'There are no facts, only interpretations.' Post-structuralism inherits this habit of skepticism, and intensifies it. It regards any confidence in the scientific method as naive, and even derives a certain masochistic intellectual pleasure from knowing for certain that we can't know anything for certain, fully conscious of the irony and paradox which doing this entails.

2. *Tone and style.* Structuralist writing tends towards abstraction and generalization: it aims for a detached, 'scientific coolness' of tone. An essay like Roland Barthes's 1966 piece 'Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative' is typical of this tone and treatment, with its discrete steps in an orderly exposition, complete with diagrams. The style is neutral and anonymous, as is typical of scientific writing.

   Post-structuralist writing, by contrast, tends to be much more emotive. Often the tone is urgent and euphoric, and the style flamboyant and self-consciously showy. Titles may well

contain puns and allusions, and often the central line of the argument is based on a pun or a word-play of some kind. Often deconstructive writing fixes on some 'material' aspect of language, such as a metaphor used by a writer, or the etymology of a word. Overall it seems to aim for an engaged warmth rather than detached coolness.

3. *Attitude to language.* Structuralists accept that the world is constructed through language, in the sense that we do not have access to reality other than through the linguistic medium. All the same, it decides to live with that fact and continue to use language to think and perceive with.

By contrast, post-structuralism is much more fundamentalist in insisting upon the consequences of the view that, in effect, reality itself is textual. Post-structuralism develops what threaten to become terminal anxieties about the possibility of achieving any knowledge through language. The verbal sign, in its view, is constantly floating free of the concept it is supposed to designate. Thus, the post- structuralist's way of speaking about language involves a rather obsessive imagery based on liquids- signs float free of what they designate, meanings are fluid, and subject to constant 'slippage' or 'spillage.' We are not fully in control of the medium of language, so meanings cannot be planted in set places. They can only be randomly scattered or 'disseminated.' Likewise, the meanings words have can never be guaranteed one hundred per cent pure. Thus, words are always 'contaminated' by their opposites-you can't define night without reference to day, or good, without reference to evil. The long-dormant metaphorical bases of words are often reactivated by their use in philosophy or literature and then interfere with literal sense, or with the stating of single meanings. Linguistic anxiety, then, is a keynote of the post-structuralist outlook.

4. *Project.* Project means the fundamental aims of each movement, what it is they want to persuade us of. Structuralism, firstly, questions structuring and categorising reality, and prompts us to break free of habitual modes or perception or categorization, but it believes that we can thereby attain a more reliable view of things.

   Post-structuralism is much more fundamental: it distrusts the very notion of reason, and the idea of the human being as an independent entity, preferring the notion of the 'dissolved' or 'constructed' subject, whereby what we may think of as the individual is really a product of social and linguistic forces-that is, not an essence at all, merely a 'tissue of textualities.' Thus, its torch of skepticism bums away the intellectual ground on which the Western civilization is built.

DECONSTRUCTION

Deconstruction involves the close reading of texts in order to demonstrate that any given text has irreconcilably contradictory meanings, rather than being a unified, logical whole. As J. Hillis Miller, the preeminent American deconstructor, has explained in an essay entitled "Stevens' Rock and Criticism as Cure" (1976), "Deconstruction is not a dismantling of the structure of a text, but a demonstration that it has already dismantled itself. Its apparently solid ground is no rock but thin air."

Deconstruction was both created and has been profoundly influenced by the French philosopher on language Jacques Derrida. Derrida, who coined the term *deconstruction,* argues that in Western culture, people tend to think and express their thoughts in terms of *binary oppositions.* Something is white but not black, masculine and therefore not feminine, a cause rather than an effect. Other common and mutually exclusive pairs include beginning/end, conscious/ unconscious, presence /absence, and speech/writing. Derrida suggests these oppositions are hierarchies in miniature, containing one term that Western culture views as positive or superior and another considered negative or inferior, even if only slightly so. Through deconstruction, Derrida aims to erase the boundary between binary oppositions-and to do so in such a way that the hierarchy implied by the oppositions is thrown into question.

Although its ultimate aim may be to criticize Western logic, deconstruction arose as a response to structuralism and formalism. Structuralists believed that all elements of human culture, including literature, may be understood as parts of a system of signs. Derrida did not believe that structuralists could explain the laws governing human signification and thus provide the key to understanding the form and meaning of everything from an African village to Greek myth to a literary text. He also rejected the structuralist belief that texts have identifiable "centers" of meaning-a belief structuralists shared with formalists.

Formalist critics, such as the New Critics, assume that a work of literature is a freestanding, self- contained object whose meaning can be found in the complex network of relations between its parts. . .. . (allusions, images, rhythms, sounds, etc.). Deconstructors, by contrast, see works in terms of their *undecidability.* They reject the formalist view that a work of literary art is demonstrably unified from beginning to end, in one

certain way, or that it is organized around a single center that ultimately can be identified. As a result, deconstructors see texts as more radically heterogeneous than do formalists. Formalists ultimately make sense of the ambiguities they find in a given text, arguing that every ambiguity serves a definite, meaningful, and demonstrable literary function. Undecidability, by contrast, is never reduced, let alone mastered. Though a deconstructive reading can reveal the incompatible possibilities generated by the text, it is impossible for the reader to decide among them.

Deconstruction is a poststructuralist theory, based largely but not exclusively on the writings of the Paris-based Jacques Derrida. It is in the first instance a philosophical theory and a theory directed towards the (re)reading of philosophical writings. Its impact on literature, mediated in North America largely through the influences of theorists at Yale University, is based in part on the fact that deconstruction sees all writing as a complex historical, cultural process rooted in the relations of texts to each other and in the institutions and conventions of writing, in part on the sophistication and intensity of its sense that human knowledge is not as controllable or as cogent as Western thought would have it and that language operates in subtle and often contradictory ways, so that certainty will always elude us.

POSTMODERNISM

Postmodernism is, to put it simply, a socio-cultural and literary theory, and a shift in perspective that has manifested in a variety of disciplines including the social sciences, art, architecture, literature, fashion, communications, and technology. It is generally agreed that the postmodern shift in perception began

sometime back in the late 1950s, and is probably still continuing. Postmodernism can be associated with the power shifts and dehumanization of the post-Second World War era and the onslaught of consumer capitalism.

The very term Postmodernism implies a relation to Modernism. Modernism was an earlier aesthetic movement which was in vogue in the early decades of the twentieth century. It has often been said that Postmodernism is at once a continuation of and a break away from the Modernist stance. To analyze this statement further, we'll need to have a quick look at the concept of Modernism.

Modernism, as manifested in literature, placed emphasis on impressionism and subjectivity, i.e., it was concerned with HOW the individual perceives, rather than WHAT; HOW impressions are formed on the individual's mind, and HOW the subjective self responds to these impressions. The stream-of- consciousness technique that was used by Modernist writers such as James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and Dorothy Richardson is a perfect illustration of the Modernist focus on subjectivity and impressionism.

Modernism also entailed a move away from the apparent objectivity of narration. A narrative is rendered objective by techniques such as an omniscient third person narrator, fixed narrative points of view, and clear-cut moral positions. Modernist literature, such as that of Faulkner, experimented with multiple and plural points of view, and ambiguous moral positions. *The Sound and the Fury,* as you already know, analyzes a single character, Cadie, through the varying perceptions of her three very different brothers, and indirectly through her daughter. The first two sections of the novel, written right off the characters' minds without chronological or logical coherence, demonstrate the strearn-of-

consciousness technique; and the concepts of right and wrong, justice and injustice are highly blurred here.

In literature, Modernism gave way to a blurring of distinction between genres. Sometimes, two or more genres, or artistic categories, were deliberately fused to form hybrid art, or one genre imbibed the qualities of another. Thus, while-T.S. Eliot and e e cummings wrote poetry that was considered closer to prose than verse, the prose styles of Virginia Woolf and James Joyce acquired poetic qualities.Evidently, one of the key features of Modernism was its emphasis on fragmented forms. Modernist narratives disregarded the traditional focus on continuity, coherence and chronology. It employed collage, or a seemingly random mix of diverse characters, incidents and images, as in *The Waste Land* by T.S. Eliot.

Modernism also involved metafictional tendencies, i.e., self-consciousness or reflexivity about the
production of a work of art. Thus, a Modernist metafictional novel will not pretend to represent reality;
on the other hand, it will proclaim that it is fiction, subtly pointing to some reality that exists beyond its
fictional world. The very fragmentary nature of such works will serve as an alienating device, urging the
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Modernism is also characterized by by "a rejection of the boundaries between high and 'low culture. For example, in architecture, pre-modernists had considered glass and steel to be inferior to classical building materials such as wood and iron. This distinction was rejected in the Modernist era, and popular culture was considered as significant as elite, classical culture.

Postmodernism shares many of the features of Modernism. Both schools reject the rigid boundaries between high and low

art. Postmodernism even goes a step further and deliberately mixes low art with high art, the past with the future, or one genre with another. Such mixing of different, incongruous elements illustrates Postmodernism's use of lighthearted parody, which was also used by Modernism. Both these schools also employed pastiche, which is the imitation of another's style (for example, if I write a novel about Shakespearean characters or in a style very similar to that of T.S. Eliot, that is pastiche). Parody and pastiche serve to highlight the self-reflexivity of Modernist and Postmodernist works, which means that parody and pastiche serve to remind the reader that the work is not "real" but fictional, constructed. Modernist and Postmodernist works are also fragmented and do not easily, directly convey a solid meaning. That is, these works are consciously ambiguous and give way to multiple interpretations. The individual or subject depicted in these works is often decentred, without a central meaning or goal in life, and dehumanized, often losing individual characteristics and becoming merely the representative of an age or civilization, like Tiresias in *The Waste Land.*

In short, Modernism and Postmodernism give voice to the insecurities, disorientation and fragmentation of the 20th century Western world. The Western world, in the 20th century, began to experience this deep sense of insecurity because it progressively lost its colonies in the Third World, was torn apart by two major World Wars and found its intellectual and social foundations shaking under the impact of new social theories and developments such as Marxism and postcolonial global migrations, new technologies and the power shift from Europe to the United States.

Though both Modernism and Postmodernism employ fragmentation, discontinuity and decentredness in theme and

technique, the basic dissimilarity between the two schools is hidden in this very aspect.

Modernism projects the fragmentation and decentredness of contemporary world as tragic. It laments the loss of the unity and centre of life and suggests that works of art can provide the unity, coherence, continuity and meaning that is lost in modern life. Thus Eliot laments that the modern world is an infertile wasteland, and the fragmentation, incoherence, of this world is reflected in the structure of the poem. However, The Waste Land, the poem, tries to recapture the lost meaning and organic unity by turning to Eastern cultures, and in the use of Tiresias as protagonist.

In Postmodernism, fragmentation and disorientation is no longer tragic. Postmodernism on the other hand celebrates fragmentation. It considers fragmentation and decentredness as the only possible way of existence, and does not try to escape from these conditions.

This is where Postmodernism meets Poststructuralism-both Postmodernism and Poststructuralism recognize and accept that it is not possible to have a coherent centre. In Derridean terms, the centre is constantly moving towards the periphery and the periphery constantly moving towards the centre. In other words, the centre, which is the seat of power, is never entirely powerful. It is continually becoming powerless, while the powerless periphery continually tries to acquire power. As a result, it can be argued that there is never a centre, or that there are always multiple centres. This postponement of the centre acquiring power or retaining its position is what Derrida called "differance." In Postmodernism's celebration of fragmentation, there is thus an underlying belief in differance, a belief that unity, meaning, coherence is continually postponed.

The Postmodernist disbelief in coherence and unity points to another basic distinction between Modernism and

Postmodernism. Modernism believes that coherence and unity is possible, thus emphasizing the importance of rationality and order. The basic assumption of Modernism seems to be that more rationality leads to more order, which leads a society to function better. To establish the

primacy of Order, Modernism constantly creates the concept of Disorder in its depiction of the Other- which includes the non-white, non-male, non-heterosexual, non-adult, non-rational and so on. In other words, to establish the superiority of Order, Modernism creates the impression that all marginal, peripheral, communities such as the non-white, non-male etc. are contaminated by Disorden

Postmodernism, however, goes to the other extreme. It does not say that some parts of the society illustrate Order, and that other parts illustrate Disorder. Postmodernism", in its criticism of the binary opposition, cynically even suggests that everything is Disorder.

The Modernist belief in order, stability and unity is what the Postmodernist thinker Lyotard calls a "metanarrative." Modernism works through metanarratives or grand narratives, while Postmodernism questions and deconstructs metanarratives.

A metanarrative is a story a culture tells itself about its beliefs and practices. For example, India tells itself that it is a democratic and secular country, though there are numerous anti-democratic, anti- secular factions and practices in India. In other words, India makes itself believe the falsehood that it is a democratic, secular country. Democracy and secularism are thus metanarratives. In short, metanarratives create and propagate grand but untrue conceptions of a society and culture. These include a society's dependence on such concepts as objective truth, progress, order and unity.

Postmodernism understands that grand narratives hide, silence and negate contradictions, instabilities and differences inherent in any social system. Postmodernism favours "mini-narratives," stories that explain small practices and local events, without pretending universality and finality. To explain this further, I can argue that the image of India's freedom struggle as

a single, focussed, concerted mass movement under the unwavering support of Mahatma Gandhi is a metanarrative, which sidelines the mini-narratives of local struggles, regional leaders and disorganized rebellions, which when considered present a very different view of Mahatma Gandhi and the independence movement. Thus, Postmodernism realizes that history, politics and culture are grand narratives of the power-wielders, which comprise falsehoods and incomplete truths.

Having deconstructed the possibility of a stable, permanent reality, Postmodernism has revolutionized the concept of language. Modernism considered language a rational, transparent tool to represent reality and the activities of the rational mind. In the Modernist view, language is representative of thoughts and things. Here, sighifiers always point to signifieds.

In Postmodernism, however, there are only surfaces, no depths. A signifier has no signified here, because there is no reality to signify.

The French philosopher Baudrillard has conceptualized the Postmodern surface culture as a simulacrum. A simulacrum is a virtual or fake reality simulated or induced by the media or other ideological apparatuses. A simulacrum is not merely an imitation or duplication-it is the substitution of the original by a simulated, fake image. Contemporary world is a simulacrum, where reality has been thus replaced by false images. This would mean, for instance, that the Iraq war that we know from newspapers and television reports has no connection whatsoever to what can be called the "real" Iraq war. The simulated image of Iraq war has become so much more popular and real than the real war, that Baudrillard argues that the real does not exist any more. In other words, in the Postmodern world, there are no originals, only copies; no territories, only maps; no reality, only simulations. Indeed, think of a million dollar Raja Ravi Varma painting that was considered the cream of art a century ago, and the millions

of cheap CDs and MP3s that have no original, that constitute contemporary art and popular culture. Here Baudrillard is not merely suggesting that the postmodern world is artificial; he is also implying that we have lost the capacity to discriminate between the real and the artificial.

Just as we have lost touch with the reality of our life, we have also moved away from the reality of the goods we consume. If the media form one driving force of the Postmodern condition, multinational capitalism and globalization is another. Frederic Jameson has related Modernism and Postmodernism to the second and third phases of capitalism. The first phase of capitalism of the 18th-19th centuries, called Market Capitalism, witnessed the early technological development such as that of the steam-driven motor, and corresponded to the Realist phase. The early 20th century, with the development of electrical and internal combustion motors, witnessed the onset of Monopoly Capitalism and Modernism. The Postmodern era corresponds to the age of nuclear and electronic technologies and Consumer Capitalism, where the emphasis is on marketing, selling and consumption rather than production. The dehumanized, globalized world, wipes out individual and national identities, in favour of multinational marketing.

It is thus clear from this exposition that there are at least three different directions taken by Postmodernism, relating to the theories of Lyotard, Baudrillard and Jameson. Postmodernism also has its roots in the theories Habermas and Foucault. Furthermore, Postmodernism can be examined from Feminist and Postcolonial angles. Therefore, one cannot pinpoint the principles of Postmodernism with finality, because there is a plurality in the very constitution of this theory.

However, let us have a look at the fundamental premises of Postmodernism that are common to all perceptions of the theory.

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Postmodernism, in its denial of an objective truth or reality, forcefully advocates the theory of constructivism-the anti-essentialist argument that everything is ideologically constructed. In other words, it is meaningless to say "I AM this or that;" you should say "I am made to think that I am this or that." Similarly, you don't really NEED Medimix soap or HDFC Life Insurance or the new Letsgo car; you are made to believe that you need these. With this one statement, I guess, it is clear enough that postmodernism finds the media to be a great deal responsible for "constructing" our identities and everyday realities. Indeed, postmodernism developed as a response to the contemporary boom in electronics and communications technologies and its revolutionizing of our old world order.

Constructivism invariably leads to relativism. Our identities are constructed and transformed every moment in relation to our social environment. Therefore there is scope for multiple and diverse , identities, multiple truths, moral codes and views of reality.

The understanding that an objective truth does not exist has invariably led the accent of Postmodernism to fall on subjectivity. Subjectivity itself is of course plural and provisional. A stress on subjectivity will naturally lead to a renewed interest in the local and specific experiences, rather than the universal and abstract; that is, on mini-narratives rather than grand narratives.

Finally, all versions of Postmodernism rely on the method of Deconstruction to analyze sociocultural situations. .

Postmodernism has often been vehemently criticized. The fundamental characteristic of Postmodernism is disbelief, which negates social and personal realities and experiences. It is easy to claim that the Gulf War or Iraq War does not exist; but then how does one account for the deaths, the loss and pain of millions of people victimized by these wars? Also,

Postmodernism fosters a deep cynicism about the one sustaining force of social life-culture. By entirely washing away the ground beneath our feet, the ideological presumptions upon which human civilization is built, Postmodernism generates a feeling of lack and insecurity in contemporary societies, which is essential for the sustenance of a capitalistic world order. Finally, when the Third World began to assert itself over Euro-centric hegemonic power, Postmodernism had rushed in with the warning that the empowerment of the periphery is but transient and temporary, and that just as Europe could not retain its imperialistic power for long, the new-found power of the erstwhile colonies is also under erasure.

In spite of the rather stretched, cynical arguments of Postmodernism, the theory has exerted a fundamental influence on late 20th century thought. It has indeed revolutionized all realms of intellectual inquiry in varying degrees.

FEMINISM

Feminism is a social theory and political movement. Primarily informed and motivated by the experience of women, it provides a critique of gender inequality and promotes women's rights, interests and issues. Feminist theorists aim to understand the nature of inequality and focus on gender politics, power relations and sexuality. Feminist political activists advocate for social, political, and economic equality between the sexes. They campaign on issues such as reproductive rights, domestic violence, maternity leave, equal pay, sexual harassment, workplace discrimination and sexual violence.

The basis of feminist ideology is that society is organised into a patriarchal system in which men have advantage over women. Feminist theory is predominantly, but not exclusively, associated with western middle class academia. Feminist activism, however, is a grass roots movement which crosses class and race boundaries. It is culturally specific and addresses the issues relevant to the women of that society, for example, genital mutilation in Sudan or the glass ceiling in North America. Some issues, such as rape, incest, mothering, are universal.

History

The earliest works on 'the woman question' criticised the restrictive role of women without necessarily claiming that women were disadvantaged or that men were to blame. Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* is one of the few works written before the 19th century that can unambiguously be called feminist. By modern standards her metaphor of women as nobility, the elite of society, coddled, fragile and in danger of intellectual and moral sloth, does not sound like a feminist argument. Wollstonecraft believed that both sexes contributed to this situation and took it for granted that women had considerable power over men.

Feminism is generally said to have begun in the 19th century as people increasingly adopted the perception that women are oppressed in a male-centered society (see patriarchy). The feminist movement is rooted in the West and especially in the reform movement of the 19th century. The organised movement is dated from the first women's rights convention at Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848.

Emmeline-Pankhurst was one of the founders of the suffragette movement and aimed to reveal the institutional sexism in British society, forming the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). Often the repeated jailing by the Cat and Mouse Act, for trivial misdemeanours in activism, inspired members to go on hunger strikes, and because of the resultant force feeding that was the practice, caused these members to be very ill, serving to draw attention to the brutality of the legal system at the time and to further their cause.

Over a century and a half the movement has grown to include diverse perspectives on what constitutes discrimination against women. Early feminists and primary feminist movements are often called the first wave and feminists after about 1960 the second wave. There is a so called third wave, but feminists disagree as to its necessity, its benefits, and its ideas. These three "waves" are known as such, because, like waves on a beach, each wave comes on top of the one before, drawing on each other.

Feminism in many forms

The name "feminism" suggests a single kind of ideology, but this has not been the case. Feminist ideas, due to the historical situation and the current legal status of women in certain countries, and many other factors, has impelled feminist ideology to move in different direction to achieve its goals. As such, there are many different kinds of feminism.

One subtype of feminism, Radical feminism, considers patriarchy to be the root cause of the most serious social problems. This form of feminism was popular in the so-called second wave (a "wave" being a

large major change in general feminist ideas), though is not as prominent today, however many identify the word "feminism" to mean the ideas proposed by Radical feminism which is not the case. Some find that the prioritization of oppression and the universalization of the idea of "Woman", which was part of traditional Radical feminist thinking, was too generic, and that women in other countries would never experience the same experience of being "woman" than women in Western countries did. Instead of gender oppression, for Western women, race, or economic status, instead of gender, may be the root oppression that they may face.

Some radical feminists advocate separatism-a complete separation of male and female in society and culture-while others question not only the relationship between men and women, but the very meaning of "man" and "woman" as well (see Queer theory); some argue that gender roles, gender identity, and sexuality are themselves social constructs (see also heteronormativity). For these feminists, feminism is a primary means to human liberation (i.e., the liberation of men as well as women, and men and women from other social problems).

Other feminists believe that there may be social problems separate from or prior to patriarchy (e.g., racism or class divisions); they see feminism as one movement of liberation among many, each with effects on each other.

Elaine Showalter's **A Literature of Their Own,** which describes three stages in the history of women's literature, also proposes a similar multi-part model of the growth of feminist theory. First, according to Showalter, comes an androgynist poetics. Next, a feminist critique and female Aesthetic, accompanied by gynocritics, follows, and these are closely pursued by gynesic poststructuralist feminist criticism and gender theory.

Androgynist poetics, having relations and perhaps roots in mid-Victorian women's writing of imitation, contends that the creative mind is sexless, and the very foundation of describing a female tradition in writing was sexist. Critics of this vein found gender as imprisoning, nor believed that gender had a bearing in the content of writing, which, according to Joyce Carol Oates is actually culture- determined. Imagination is too broad to be hemmed in by gender.

However, from the 1970s on, most feminist critics reject the genderless mind, finding that the "imagination" cannot evade the conscious or unconscious structures of gender. Gender, it could be said, is part o-f that culture-determination which Oates says serves as inspiration. Such a position emphasizes "the impossibility of separating the imagination from a socially, sexually, and historically positioned self." This movement of thought allowed for a feminist critique as critics attacked the meaning of sexual difference in a patriarchal society/ideology. Images of male-wrought representations of women (stereotypes and exclusions) came under fire, as was the '"division, oppression, inequality, [and] interiorized inferiority for women.'"

The female experience, then, began to take on positive affirmations. The Female Aesthetic arose -- expressing a unique female consciousness and a feminine tradition in literature -- as it celebrated an intuitive female approach in the interpretation of women's texts. It "spoke of a vanished nation, a lost motherland;

of female vernacular or Mother Tongue; and of a powerful but neglected women's culture." Writers like Virginia Woolf and Dorothy Richardson, emerging out of the Victorian period and influenced by its writings were perhaps the first women to recognize this. In "Professions for Women," Woolf discusses how a woman writer seeks within herself "the pools, the depths, the dark places where the

largest fish slumber," inevitably colliding against her own sexuality to confront "something about the body, about the passions."

The French feminists of the day discussed this Mother Tongue, calling it **I'ecriture feminine.** Accessible to men and women alike, but representing "female sexual morphology," **I'ecriture feminine** sought a way of writing which literally embodied the female, thereby fighting the "subordinating, linear style of classification or distinction."

There are problems with the Female Aesthetic, which feminist critics recognized. Even its most fervent fans avoided defining exactly what constituted the style of **I'ecriture feminine,** as any definition would then categorize it and safely subsume it as a genre under the linear patriarchal structure. Its very restlessness and ambiguity defied identification as part of its identity. Needless to say, some feminists and women writers could feel excluded by the surreality of the Female Aesthetic and its stress on the biological forms of female experience, which, as Showalter says, also bears close resemblance to sexist essentialism. Men may try their hand at writing woman's bodies, but according to the feminist critique and Aesthetic, only woman whose very biology gave her an edge, could read these texts successfully -- risking marginalization and ghettoization of both women's literature and theory. Lastly, the Female Aesthetic was charged with racism, as it rarely referred to racial or class differences between women and largely referred to a white woman's literary tradition.

Gynocritics, which developed shoulder-to-shoulder with the Female Aesthetic, attempted to resolve some of these problems, by agreeing that women's literature lay as the central concern for feminist criticism, but "rejected the concept of an essential female identity and style." One branch of gynocriticism sought to revise Freudian structures and take the edge off of an adversarial

methodology of criticism. These critics emphasized a Pre-Oedipal phase wherein the daughter's bond to her mother inscribes the key factor in gender identity. Matriarchal values desolve intergenerational conflicts and build upon a female tradition of literature rather than the struggle of Oedipus and Lais at the crossroads.

Poststructuralism eventually influenced the course of feminist theory with the idea of a motherless as well as fatherless text. The female experience, as it relates to texts, only occurs in the feminine subjectivity of the reading process. "Gynesis" or "gynetic disruptions" occur in texts when the reader explores "the textual consequences and representations of 'the feminine.'" These considerations or interruptions in the discourse indicate a consideration or interruption of the patriarchal system.

Lastly and most recently are developments of an over-arching gender theory, which considers gender, both male and female, as a social construction upon biological differences. Gender theory proposes to explore "ideological inscription and the literary effects of the sex/gender system," and as many advantages, opening up the literary theory stage and bringing in questions of masculinity into feminist theory. Also, taking gender as a fundamental analytic category brings feminist criticism from the margin to the center, though risks depoliticizing the study of women.

POSTCOLONIALISM

Post-colonial theory deals with the reading and writing of literature written in previously or currently colonized

countries, or literature written in colonizing countries which deals with colonization or colonized peoples. It focuses particularly on

1. the way in which literature by the colonizing culture distorts the experience and realities, and inscribes the inferiority, of the colonized people
2. on literature by colonized peoples which attempts to articulate their identity and reclaim their past in the face of that past's inevitable otherness.

It can also deal with the way in which literature in colonizing countries appropriates the language, images, scenes, traditions and so forth of colonized countries.

This page addresses some of the complexities of the post-colonial situation, in terms of the writing and reading situation of the colonized people, and of the colonizing people.

The literature(s) of the colonized

Postcolonial theory is built in large part around the concept of otherness. There are however problems with or complexities to the concept of otherness, for instance:

1. otherness includes doubteness, both identity and difference, so that every other, every different than and excluded by is dialectically created and includes the values and meaning of the colonizing culture even as it rejects its power to define;
2. the western concept of the oriental is based, as Abdul JanMohamed argues, on the Manichean allegory (seeing the world as divided into mutually excluding opposites): if the west is ordered, rational, masculine, good, then the orient is chaotic, irrational, feminine, evil. Simply to reverse this polarizing is to be complicit in its totalizing and identity-destroying power (all is reduced to a set of dichotomies, black or white, etc.);

3. colonized peoples are highly diverse in their nature and in their traditions, and as beings in cultures they are both constructed and changing, so that while they may be 'other' from the colonizers, they are also different one from another and from their own pasts, and should not be totalized or essentialized through such concepts as a black consciousness, Indian soul, aboriginal culture and so forth. This totalization and essentialization is often a form of nostalgia which has its inspiration more in the thought of the colonizers than of the colonized, and it serves give the colonizer a sense of the unity of his culture while mystifying that of others; as John Frow remarks, it is a making of a mythical One out of many...

4. the colonized peoples will also be other than their pasts, which can be reclaimed but never reconstituted, and so must be revisited and realized in partial, fragmented ways. You can't go home again.

Postcolonial theory is also built around the concept of resistance, of resistance as subversion, or opposition, or mimicry - but with the haunting problem that resistance always inscribes the resisted into the texture of the resisting: it is a two-edged swdrd. As well, the concept of resistance carries with it or can carry with it ideas about human freedom, liberty, identity, individuality, etc., which ideas may not have been held, or held in the same way, in the colonized culture's view of humankind.

On a simple political/cultural level, there are problems with the fact that to produce a literature which helps to reconstitute the identity of the colonized one may have to function in at the very least the means of production of the colonizers -- the writing, publishing, advertising and production of books, for instance. These may well require a centralized economic and cultural system which is ultimately either a western import or a hybrid form, uniting local conceptions with western conceptions.

The concept of producing a national or cultural literature is in most cases a concept foreign to the traditions of the colonized peoples, who (a) had no literature as it is conceived in the western traditions or in fact no literature or writing at all, and/or b) did not see art as having the same function as constructing and defining cultural identity, and/or c) were, like the peoples of the West Indies, transported into a wholly different geographical/ political/ economic/cultural world. (India, a partial exception, had a long-established tradition of letters; on the other hand it was a highly balkanized sub-continent with little if any common identity and with many divergent sub-cultures). It is always a changed, a reclaimed but hybrid identity, which is created or called forth by the colonizeds' attempts to constitute and represent identity.

The very concepts of nationality and identity may be difficult to conceive or convey in the cultural traditions of colonized peoples.

There are complexities and perplexities around the difficulty of conceiving how a colonized country can reclaim or reconstitute its identity in a language that is now but was not its own language, and genres which are now but were not the genres of the colonized. One result is that the literature may be written in the style of speech of the inhabitants of a particular colonized people or area, which language use does not read like Standard English and in which literature the standard literary allusions and common metaphors and symbols may be inappropriate and/or may be replaced by allusions and tropes which are alien to British culture and usage. It can become very difficult then for others to recognize or respect the work as literature (which concept may not itself have relevance -- see next point).

There other are times when the violation of the aesthetic norms of western literature is inevitable,

1. as colonized writers search to encounter their culture's ancient yet transformed heritage, and
2. as they attempt to deal with problems of social order and meaning so pressing that the normal aesthetic transformations of western high literature are not relevant, make no sense.

The idea that good or high literature may be irrelevant and misplaced at a point in a culture's history, and therefore for a particular cultural usage not be good literature at all, is difficult for us who are raised in the culture which strong aesthetic ideals to accept.

The development (development itself may be an entirely western concept) of hybrid and reclaimed cultures in colonized countries is uneven, disparate, and might defy those notions of order and common sense which may be central not only to western thinking but to literary forms and traditions produced through western thought.

The term 'hybrid' used above refers to the concept of hybridity, an important concept in post-colonial theory, referring to the integration (or, mingling) of cultural signs and practices from the colonizing and the colonized cultures ("integration" may be too orderly a word to represent the variety of stratagems, desperate or cunning or good-willed, by which people adapt themselves to the necessities and the opportunities of more or less oppressive or invasive cultural impositions, live into alien cultural patterns through their own structures of understanding, thus producing something familiar but new). The assimilation and adaptation of cultural practices, the cross-fertilization of cultures, can be seen as positive, enriching, and dynamic, as well as as oppressive. "Hybridity" is also a useful concept for helping to break down the false sense that colonized cultures -- or colonizing cultures for that matter - are monolithic, or have essential, unchanging features.

The representation of these uneven and often hybrid, polyglot, multivalent cultural sites (reclaimed or discovered colonized cultures searching for identity and meaning in a complex and partially alien past) may not look very much like the representations of bourgeois culture in western art, ideologically shaped as western art is to represent its own truths (that is, guiding fictions) about itself.

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To quote Homi Bhabha on the complex issue of representation and meaning from his article in Greenblatt and Gun's *Redrawing the Boundaries,* "Culture as a strategy of survival is both transnational and translational. It is transnational because contemporary postcolonial discourses are rooted in specific histories of cultural displacement, whether they are the middle passage of slaver and indenture, the voyage out of the civilizing mission, the fraught accommodation of Third World migration to the West after the Second World War, or the traffic of economic and political refugees within and outside the Third World. Culture is translational because such spatial histories of displacement -- now accompanied by the territorial ambitions of global media technologies -- make the question of how culture signifies, or what is signified by culture, a rather complex issue. It becomes crucial to distinguish between the semblance and similitude of the symbols across diverse cultural experiences -- literature, art, music, ritual, life, death -- and the social specificity of each of these productions of meaning as they circulate as signs within specific contextual locations and social systems of value. The transnational dimension of cultural transformation -- migration, diaspora, displacement, relocation -- makes the process of cultural translation a complex form of signification. The natural(ized), unifying discourse of nation, peoples, or authentic folk tradition, those embedded myths of cultures particularity, cannot be readily referenced. The great, though unsettling, advantage of this position is that it makes you increasingly aware of the construction of culture and the invention of tradition.