

**B.A. (Hons.) English
Semester-2
ENMJ-201**

History of English Literature-I



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Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University
(Established by Government of Gujarat)

B.A. (Hons.) English
Semester 2
ENMJ 201
History of English Literature I

Block

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UNIT : 1**THE PURPOSE AND METHODS OF STUDYING
THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE****: STRUCTURE :**

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Answers

1.0 OBJECTIVES

1. The main objectives of this unit are:
2. To discuss in detail the importance of studying the history of English literature,
3. To discuss the aims of studying the history of English literature,

4. To expose you to the various aspects of the history of English literature,
5. To discuss in detail the importance of studying the history of English literature through various methods,
6. To acquaint you with the various methods of studying the history of English literature.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

English literature is one of most widely read bodies of literature. It has produced a great number of writers. The way English literature has developed over the course of time is phenomenal in the sense that every writer had a considerable influence on the literature written and produced in the English language. English literature has seen some of greatest minds of literature like Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Swift, Wordsworth, Dickens, Eliot etc. who enriched English literature with their writing and made it one of the most widely read bodies of literature in the world. English literature as we see it today is an outcome of the hundreds of years of literary labour of hundreds of writers. It has undergone some serious transformations over the years. Because of its vastness and abundant output, we have a rich and varied history of English literature. In this unit, we shall discuss about the importance of studying the history of English literature and why one has to study the history of this great body of literature. We shall also look at various methods that can be used to study the history of English literature.

1.2 THE PURPOSE OF STUDYING THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

Literature has always remained an integral part of human existence. It has been serving as a rich source of entertainment to readers since hundreds of centuries. Literature in fact has a very fundamental role to play in human lives in the sense that it influences our lives in so many ways. It is a part of our cultural heritage and can enrich our lives in all sorts of ways. Literature has the unique ability of leading us intellectually and emotionally. It deepens our understanding of history, society and each of our lives. We cannot even think of a life without any kind of reading or literature since reading is a significant part of our lives. Literature and reading have become popular means of recreation and acquiring knowledge today. An increasing number of people are turning to literature to find solace from the busy and competitive world of the day. Literature even has answers to our most complex of questions. Even in the present technological age of computers and smartphones, literature has not ceased to be significant. It is increasingly becoming popular among people. Literature is also a form of art for those who are interested

in it. The present chapter will deal with the purpose and importance of studying the history of English Literature.

The literature produced in the English language is very vast since English is a global language. Almost every nation of the world produces literature in English, and it is read by millions of people every day across the globe. English Literature is the widest body of literature in the world. Thousands of books are published every year in every nation in the English language. It has a great literary tradition, and English Literature is one the most studied subjects in the world at present. The study of English literature allows students to develop new ideas and ethical standpoints. It provides a new way of thinking about the world. The study of English literature gives an opportunity to the readers to compare their cultures with the culture of the English nations. But why should one study the history of English literature? What is the purpose of studying English literature and its history? What is the object in studying this literature? These are some of the important questions that crop up in our minds, and in this section, we shall will try to answer these questions.

1.2.1. Historical and Political Events

History or politics has always influenced literature. Literature, in fact, is a reflection of contemporary historical or political environment. The history of England has always been the history of great and significant transformations. Right from the very beginning, the English nation has had a rich history. The study of the history of English literature allows the reader or student to know more about the major historical and political events that took place during a particular age or period. The literature produced in a particular age has generally been termed based on the name of the reigning monarch. The Elizabethan age is called so because Queen Elizabeth was the reigning monarch during that period and the literature published during Queen Elizabeth's reign comes under the Elizabethan age of literature. This acquaints the readers or students with the historical and political background of the age. Additionally, the historical or political background of a period has its influence on the literature of the age. Every author writes under the shadow of his or her nation's history or politics. Historical and social conditions of the age have its effects on the writings of an author. Thus, the study of the history of English literature makes it easy for the readers or students to know more about the prevalent historical, social or political conditions of the period, and the ways in which it influenced the literature of the age. The readers will be able to derive more meaning from studying the literature of the age when they study it under the lights of the contemporary historical or political environment of the age. So, while studying literature of the Elizabethan

age, the readers will be able to see how Elizabethan age being an age of peace and exploration influenced the literature of the age. While studying the literature of the romantic period, the readers will be able to find why romantics turned to nature in the age of industrial revolution and how social conditions of the day finds expression in the literature of a particular period.

1.2.2. Authors

In studying the history of English literature, the readers will come across various authors. Every age has produced a great number of writers, each different from the other. The study of the history of English literature allows the readers to explore the lives of different authors and the ways in which he wrote. The history of English literature also provides the biographical information about the author, based on which the readers can examine the author's work in relation to his life. An author writes under the shadow of not only his or her nation's history or politics but also under the shadow of his own personal life. The kind of life an author has lived influences his writings in numerous ways. His writings are shaped by his own personal experience of the world. Thus, studying the biographical information of the author through the history of English literature allows the readers to explore the lives of authors, their personal experiences of the world around them and its impacts on their writings. The readers find it easy to relate and examine the author's work with his own life and thought. It is only through the biographical study of the author that the readers would be able to know how the author's thoughts and experiences are reflected in his works. The study of the history of English literature makes it easy to know how a particular author lived and worked, how he met success or failure, how he influenced his age and how his age influenced him.

1.2.3. The Study of Author's Best Works

The study of the history of English literature not only familiarize the readers with the biographical information about the author but also with the best literary works written and produced by that particular author. Every author has written great literature, and the study of the history of English literature allows the readers to confront the best literary works produced by the author. The readers can critically know about the literary works of every author and also about the importance of that particular work in the canon of English literature. Every great literary work has influenced literature in so many ways. By studying the history of English literature, the readers would be able to see the place of a particular literary work in the canon of English literature, and also how that piece of

literature influenced the literature of the later ages. Thus, the history of English literature acquaints the readers with the best literary works of authors and their importance in the canon of English literature. The readers can also know about the years in which those great literary works were published. By knowing when Shakespeare's great tragedies were first staged and published, the readers can feel a sense of surprise to the genius of Shakespeare. Shakespeare had talked about many fields which were not even in existence in those times like botany. Studying the history and reading the great works of literature acquaints the readers with the great literary geniuses that authors were. Thus, studying the history of English literature becomes very important in the sense that it familiarizes readers with the best works of literature in every epoch, and the literary value those works carry.

1.2.4. Various Literary Epochs

The history of English literature is divided in various ages or periods. These ages have been named based on the name of the reigning monarch of England or the major writer of that age. The history of English literature has been divided in these ages for the sake of convenience so that the readers could distinguish easily between the authors and their works. The study of the history of English literature enables the readers to study these different ages in comparison to one another, showing what each gained from preceding epoch, and how each aided in the development of a national literature. Such a study of the history of English literature allows the readers to distinguish between different ages. The readers can see the difference between the characteristics of different ages. They can easily notice the difference between the literature of the Elizabethan age from the literature of the Victorian age. This categorization enables an easy study of the literature produced. The ages also make it easy for the readers to study the authors belonging to the same era since the authors belonging to the same era almost share their characteristics with one another. The readers can easily discern the difference between the authors of different ages. A thorough historical study of the various literary epochs also tells us about the dominant modes of literary writing in different ages. Elizabethan age was known chiefly for its drama whereas the Victorian age was known primarily because of its novels. The romantic age was known for its poetry whereas the Victorian age and the Enlightenment age were known for the progress and development in their prose writings.

1.2.5. Language and Style

Language is one the most important aspects of studying the history of English literature. It has constantly evolved over centuries. How we and modern-day authors use the English language today was not the case with how Elizabethans used it. English language was written very differently in those years. English language was in the initial stages in those times. The language of Chaucer and Langland has become obsolete today since it is not used anymore. Even the spellings and meanings of some words have evolved over the years in the sense that they didn't mean in those days what it means today. 'You' was 'thou' or 'thee' in those days; 'your' was 'thy' or 'thine'. The study of the history of English literature tells us how English language has evolved from the days of Geoffrey Chaucer to the modern-day English language. Chaucer begins his *Canterbury Tales* with 'whan' and not the modern day 'when'. Shakespeare was the greatest writer English literature has ever seen. But his contribution is not only limited to the English literature but also extends to the English language. He had greatly influenced not only the theatre, films, poets and novelists but also the English language, with words that we use every day. Shakespeare had a considerable influence on the English language in the sense that he has enriched the English language by introducing thousands of new words through his dramas. How George Bernard Shaw used English language was very much different from how Shakespeare used it. There is an obvious difference between the language of the two great dramatists of the English language, and this shows how English language has undergone tremendous transformations over the centuries in the writings of numerous writers. A thorough study familiarizes the readers with these transformations. Such a study also enables the readers to notice the difference between the writing styles of two different authors of the same era. Every author has a unique style of writing. Chaucer used to write in rhyme royal whereas other poets of his age wrote in a relatively different style. Shakespeare was the master of unrhymed iambic pentameter, also called the blank verse whereas other dramatists of his age could not match the linguistic genius of Shakespeare chiefly because of employing a different style of writing. The writing style of *Beowulf* differs considerably from that of Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922). The language of Shakespeare's four great tragedies differs significantly from the language used by George Bernard Shaw and Harold Pinter in their plays. Thus, it is only through the study of the history of English literature that we can discern this difference in the language used by various authors.

1.2.6. Literary Movements

Literary movements are a way to divide literature into categories of similar features. The writers belonging to a particular literary movement share literary features with one another. There is a stark similarity between the works of authors belonging to the same literary movement since they believe in the same literary ideology. They have same style of writing. There is a recurring theme in their works since most of their works have the same focal point which means to say that they talk about same things, and upheld same ideals. The study of the history of English literature reveals how different literary movements evolved over different time periods. The study helps the readers in understanding how and when a particular literary movement came into existence, who were the chief writers of that movement, how it differed from the preceding literary movements and how it influenced the succeeding ones. Thus, through the study of the history of English literature, the readers can understand how ‘Cavalier Poets’ differed from ‘Metaphysical Poets’ and ‘Lake Poets’; how ‘Scottish Chaucerians’ differed from the ‘University Wits’; how ‘Romanticism’ differed from ‘Realism’; how ‘Modernism’ differed from ‘Postmodernism’ etc. Such a study of English literature enables the readers to trace the progress and development of various literary styles of writing. It also reveals a lot about the subject matter around which the literature of a particular literary movement was centred. Thus, the study of the history of English literature becomes very important in the sense that it reveals a lot more about various literary developments over the centuries. Thus, the study of the history of English literature acquaints the readers with the prevailing literary ideologies of every era. The readers can distinguish between one set of authors from the other based on the ideologies they believed in and the features of their works. The history of English literature also tells the readers about which literary movements came first and which later. It also makes it easy for the readers to recognize how Richard Lovelace and William Davenant (the Cavalier Poets) differed from John Donne, George Herbert and Andrew Marvell (the Metaphysical Poets) based on their subject matter and style of writing. So, studying the history of English literature tells the readers a great deal about various literary movements, how the writers’ belief in a particular literary ideology influenced their work and their place in the canon of English literature, how they differed from other writers, how their work influenced the literature coming in later decades etc.

1.2.7. Literature as an Art

Literature is also an art, art in words. It has an artistic quality. Art in general is a reflection of some truth and beauty which are in the world. In

this sense, literature also reflects earthly truth and beauty. In art in general, it has to be perfect in order to reflect the worldly truth and beauty. Any imperfection in the use of colours or shades fails the purpose of art. Literature also in this sense has to be perfect in terms of using accurate words and phrases to convey the truth and beauty. The history of English literature enables the readers to see how writers in different ages use literature to reflect the universal truth and beauty. It tells us how Shakespeare's literary art differs from that of Milton's, Dryden's and Wordsworth's. Different writers employ different techniques to reflect the universal truth and beauty, and the study of the history of English literature acquaints the readers with the literary techniques of these different writers.

1.2.8. Various Literary Developments

The literature that we see today is a result of the numerous literary transformations that took place over the centuries. There is no similarity between the twenty first century literature and the literature of Shakespeare or Milton's age. It has constantly evolved over the course of time and it is still evolving. What we see today is totally different from what it was in the sixteenth or seventeenth or eighteenth centuries, and all this is a result of the numerous literary transformations and developments that took place during the course of time. The history of English literature plays an important role in letting the readers know about these significant literary developments. On reading it the readers would be able to notice how literature has evolved over time. In the sixteenth century literature verse (poetry) was the dominant mode of literary expression. Dramatists of the Elizabethan age and even later ones used to write in verse form and their drama was called verse drama. Prose was never the medium of literary expression. But it was in the eighteenth century that prose rose to prominence when writers began to write more and more in the prose medium. The writers of the Victorian age also used prose as a medium of literary expression, and it was in this age that novel rose to prominence. The Theatre of the Absurd that came in the twentieth century was also a breakaway from the literature of earlier times. The science fiction that emerged in the novels of H. G. Wells was also a remarkable shift in the field of literature in the sense that never ever before literature had incorporated the elements of science to tell a story. The social realism that took birth in the literature of Victorian age was also a major literary shift in the sense that literature had begun to discuss the issues of contemporary English society for the first time. Social issues of the day found expression in the novels of Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray, Elizabeth Gaskell and many other literary artists of the time.

The One-Act Play that developed in later centuries is also a major literary development. Thus, the study of the history of English literature acquaints the readers with great literary developments that changed the face of literature. On reading the history of English literature the readers come to know how literature has evolved over the course of time, and when and how different literary genres came into existence.

1.3 THE METHODS OF STUDYING THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

The body of literature produced in the English language is very large. English literature is one of the widest areas of literature at present. It has a very rich history. English literature as we see it today is a result of numerous transformations that took place over the course of centuries. It has constantly evolved and acquired new shapes with every writer rising to the literary scene. English language and literature have witnessed the growth and dominance of some of the biggest stars of literature. It is one of the richest bodies of literatures available to readers at present. It was flourishing even in the age in which the majority of people were illiterate. Because of its richness and abundance, it is very essential to study it in a systematic and organized way. A number of history books of English literature are available in the market at present which follows a certain way of going about the history of English literature. But we as readers also have to follow certain basic methods to understand the history of English literature in a better way. A clear methodical study is required to understand the history of literature produced in the English language. In this chapter, we shall talk about some of the basic and most important methods of studying the history of English literature.

1.3.1. Biographical Method

English literature has witnessed the rise of a great number of authors. It is remarkable because of its literary richness and abundant output. English literature has produced some of the greatest writers. The literary contributions of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton, Dryden, Wordsworth and many others still remain unparalleled. The literary contributions of such numerous writers have enriched literature produced in the English language. Every writer had a tremendous influence on the English literary tradition. Studying the lives of these great authors in chronological order is very important. Every history book on English literature discusses at some length the lives of major and minor writers. Such a study would give an overview of how an author lived his or her life and based on this we as readers can draw inferences about how an author's life influenced his or her writing. Thus, it becomes very

important to study the life of authors to better understand the history of English literature and their work.

The study of the life of an author provides the readers with an opportunity to analyse and understand that author's work in relation to his life. The study of the biography of an author is very important to understand his contribution and place in the canon of literature. Every literary work is the product of the life of its author. Charles Dickens dealt with child labour in his novels because he himself had worked in factories to support his family when he was very young. His novels also dealt with Debtors Prison because his father was imprisoned due to heavy debt. Every age had its own political and historical challenges. This political and historical environment of the age had a considerable influence on the writings of the authors. The authors lived their lives under the shadow of the contemporary political and historical environment. Thus, it becomes very important to study the lives of different authors to understand their literary output.

Studying the history of English literature keeping in mind the biography of the author is very important. Dr Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* (1779-81) is a famous work comprising short biographies and critical appraisals of 52 poets. The work was remarkable not only for its critical commentaries on the 52 poets but also for giving short biographies of those poets. This emphasized the reading of biographical information as well to support one's interpretation of the literature of the author and the age.

The biographical information about various authors also enables the readers to develop an understanding of who came first and who came later. Generally, in any age, in history books of English literature, the discussion starts with major writers first and minor writers later. Any discussion on the Elizabethan age in history books begins with a discussion on Shakespeare and his works first and then we move on to other writers. Philip Sidney, Ben Jonson, Thomas Kyd and many others come later in history books even though they were born before Shakespeare, and thus in such cases, the biographical reading plays a major role in acquainting the readers with who came first and who came later based on the dates and years of their birth. It is noteworthy that Philip Sidney, John Lyly, Thomas Kyd, Walter Raleigh and many others came before Shakespeare. The biographical information also acquaints the readers with who died first and who later. Wordsworth and Coleridge are the two senior romantic poets who came before Byron and Keats and popularised romantic poetry. But both Byron and Keats lived a short life and died before Wordsworth and Coleridge living lives of only thirty-six and twenty-five years respectively. It is the biographical information that

tells us that Wordsworth died twenty-nine years after Keats' death. Thus, the biographical information helps the readers in understanding the lives of different authors and also how each differed from the other in terms of duration and quality of life.

Thus, the biographical method is an effective way to understand the history of English literature in the sense that it allows the readers to get familiarized with the works of different authors and study it in relation to their lives. Some critics were also of the opinion that the biographical component should never be underestimated when studying and analysing the works of an author since it provides the background for such a study. Biographical criticism plays a major role in the interpretation of the works of any author. It was in fact a significant mode of literary inquiry throughout the 20th century, particularly in the studies of Charles Dickens, F. Scott Fitzgerald, among others. Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* (1779-81) was possibly the first thorough-going exercise in biographical criticism. Thus, following the great tradition set by Dr Samuel Johnson, it is important that we as readers study the biography of different authors to better understand the history of English literature.

1.3.2. Historical Method

The historical method is the most common method of studying the history of English literature. It is in fact one of the most widely used methods. It provides a panoramic view of how English literature progressed from time to time. The historical method gives the readers a detailed scenario of how literature developed amidst the socio-political and historical environment of different ages. It acquaints the readers with the social, political and historical conditions of different periods and allows them to study the literary works in the light of these socio-political and historical conditions.

The historical method of studying the history of English literature plays a very significant role in familiarizing the readers with the overall contemporary environment of different ages or periods. The historical method acquaints the readers with the major political and historical events of the age. The political and historical events were said to have considerable influence on the writings of the age. It was believed by critics and scholars that the political and historical environment of the age had a tremendous influence on the writings of the authors of that age. What happened in the society and the parliament of the nation had a sudden and considerable impact on what the writer was writing. In other words, the writers wrote under the shadow of contemporary society, politics and history in the sense that their writing was significantly influenced by the changes that took place in society, politics and history.

The historical method exposes the readers to the prevalent socio-political and historical environment of the age.

The study of the history of English literature through the historical method is very fundamental in the sense that the readers would be able to understand the historical context more efficiently. The study of Elizabethan literature would begin with the study of how England as a nation developed in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The Elizabethan age was the age known for settlement and expansion. The British empire grew quickly under the reign of Queen Elizabeth. It was perhaps the most remarkable epoch for the expansion of both mental and geographical horizons. A totally different kind of English society was emerging in England under the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and this was very much reflected in the literature produced in the age. The political and historical events that took place in the Elizabethan period had a significant and considerable influence on the literature of the age. For the first time in the history of English literature, literature was flourishing and becoming increasingly popular. The political expansion had a direct impact on the literature of the age due to which it was increasingly becoming popular. The plethora of great writers that emerged and wrote in the period of the reign of Queen Elizabeth was primarily the result of the great and positive political and historical environment of the age. Dryden was also of the same opinion as he attributed the success of Shakespeare and Fletcher 'to the genius of the age and nation in which they lived.' The industrial revolution that happened in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had significantly influenced the literature produced in those times. It can be very clearly seen that the novels of Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray and Elizabeth Gaskell were tremendously influenced by the political and historical events that took place in Victorian England. The works of female writers such as Jane Austen, George Eliot and Bronte sisters were highly influenced by and based on contemporary society. Thus, the historical method allows the readers to acquaint themselves with the political and historical background of every age and then study the works of different authors under the light of the prevalent historical and political environment.

Dr Samuel Johnson is known for his insistence on the historical approach for studying the works of an author and the history of English literature. According to him, Literature is not written to a fixed pattern but is conditioned by the writer's age and environment. Johnson for the first time makes the historical aspect an essential principle of literary criticism when he said, 'to judge rightly of an author, we must transport ourselves to his time, and examine what were the wants of his contemporaries, and what were his means of supplying them. That which is easy at one time

was difficult at another.’ The historical estimate, for Johnson, is an important factor in the real estimate of an author. His *Lives of the Poets* (1779-81) is based on a careful study of the times in which those 52 poets lived. Thus, the historical method would enable the readers to efficiently understand the context in which the authors lived and wrote. It provides readers with an adequate background to study and analyse the works of the authors of every age. Through the historical method, the readers would be able to better understand the times in which the authors lived and consequently wrote. Thus, the historical method provides adequate background to the readers to study the history of English literature.

Though it is quite normal, studying the history of English literature through the historical method would develop into readers an understanding of how literature progressed from time to time. Literature has always undergone considerable changes right from its time of beginning. It has constantly evolved over time in terms of language, style, form and content. The literature produced in the present age is very much different from what was written in the days of Chaucer, Shakespeare and Milton. Their style of writing significantly differed from how it is written today. The style of writing adopted by George Bernard Shaw was very much different from the style of writing employed by the great William Shakespeare. It is through the historical method that we as readers can get the idea of how literature has developed from the times of Chaucer through Shakespeare and Milton to the present-day modern writers. The historical method also allows the readers to familiarise themselves with the various literary developments like prose, novel, prose drama, realistic novel, theatre of absurd, kitchen sink drama etc. It plays a very crucial role in acquainting the readers with such major literary developments that took place throughout. Thus, the historical method proves to be a very fundamental method to study the history of English literature.

1.3.3. Literary Method

The literary method has to be an obvious selection since we are concerned with the study of English literature and its history. It is an important method in the sense that it exposes the readers to the literary aspect of the history of English literature. Through the use of this method, the readers would be able to see and understand the way different writers in the history of English literature used to write. The literary method plays a very significant role in developing ‘literary critique’ in the minds of readers. The readers through the use of the literary method would be able to understand the unique art of writing adopted by different authors.

The literary method is one of the most important methods of studying the history of English literature because it exposes the readers to the plethora

of literary writing. The canon of English literature has been enriched by the literary contributions of hundreds of writers. All these writers had a very unique way of writing. Some of them were even considered the masters of certain styles of writing. Shakespeare is considered as the great master of blank verse even though it was invented by Henry Howard, the Earl of Surrey. Shakespeare practised blank verse to perfection which none could match. Chaucer used to write most of his poems in the 'Rhyme Royal' stanza form. The curtail sonnet was a form invented by Gerald Manley Hopkins. The Pre-Raphaelites had their own way of writing poetry. The writings of Wordsworth and Coleridge differed significantly from those of their predecessors. So, almost every author had a unique way of writing. The study of the history of English literature through the literary method acquaints the readers with such different ways of writing adopted by different authors. The literary method plays a very fundamental role in exposing readers to popular forms of English writing. The literary method also plays a very significant role in acquainting the readers with how English literature has evolved over time in terms of its content and subject matter. The early English literature was either focused on the historical accounts of kings, queens or princes. Some of Shakespeare's works deal with the stories of such characters taken from historical accounts. He referred to *Holinshed's Chronicles* for the historical accounts for some of his great tragedies. Christopher Marlowe, Edmund Spenser and George Daniel also used *Holinshed's Chronicles* as a primary source for their works. The early English literature was also highly based on biblical stories including works such as *Piers Plowman* by William Langland, *The Merchant of Venice* by Shakespeare, *Paradise Lost* by John Milton, *The Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan and many others. But with the passage of time, there occurred a shift in writing a different kind of content. The periodical in the hands of Addison and Steele began focusing on presenting the daily lives of English people. The poetry of Wordsworth and other romantics began talking about mother nature. The novels in the hands of Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray and Elizabeth Gaskell began portraying Victorian society and its evils. The psychological novels of Jane Austen inaugurated a different kind of subject writing. What appeared in the science fiction novels of H. G. Wells was unprecedented in the history of English literature. The emergence of 'the Theatre of Absurd' in the mid-twentieth century was a new turn in content writing in the history of English literature. The literary method thus plays a very significant role in acquainting the readers with the plethora of developments that took place in the history of English literature in terms of its content and subject matter. The readers would be able to better understand how literary content or subject matter

has undergone substantial transformations over time in the history of English literature.

1.3.4. Linguistic Method

Language is the most fundamental aspect of any literature. The body of literature produced in the English language is substantial. It has been enriched by the writings of hundreds of authors who used language differently. The English language has considerably evolved from the earliest of times. The study of the history of English literature through the linguistic method allows the readers to see and understand how the English language has evolved over a period of time. The linguistic method brings to the attention of the readers the various ways in which the English language has transformed. The readers can well acquaint themselves with such linguistic developments and transformations through the use of the linguistic method.

The linguistic method plays a pivotal role in letting the readers know about how the English language was used differently by different authors. Not just what is written but how it is written is also important. The linguistic method of studying the history of English literature reveals to us that the English language was used in a different way in earlier periods. How we use the English language today was not the case with the authors in the Old English Period. Much of the language used in the Old English Period stands obsolete today. The English language used by Chaucer and Langland was very much different from how later day authors used it. The vocabulary and the spellings of words were also very different in the early periods: 'you' was 'thou' or 'thee' and 'your' was 'thy' or 'thine'. Shakespeare also enriched the English language with his genius in the sense that he had considerable influence on the English language. He made substantial contributions to the development of the English language. The linguistic method acquaints the readers with the various ways in which the English language has been used. How Shakespeare used it was very much different from how G. B. Shaw used it. How Milton used it was very much different from how Wordsworth and Coleridge used it. The language in prose used by Charles Dickens and other essayists was very much different from the language used by twentieth-century prose writers. Thus, the linguistic method of studying the history of English literature plays a significant role in allowing the readers to explore the ways in which the English language was used over a period of time. The English language has undergone tremendous transformations from the times of Chaucer through Shakespeare, Milton and Wordsworth to Dickens, Shaw and other modern-day authors, and the linguistic method acquaints the readers with such developments and

transformations. The linguistic method thus plays a fundamental role in the study of the history of English literature.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-1

Answer the following questions:

1. Why is it important to study the history of English literature? Discuss in brief.

.....

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2. Define and discuss in brief the various methods used to study the history of English literature.

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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-2

Fill in the blanks with given options in the brackets:

1. Literature has always remained an integral part of human..... [existence/clothing]
2. History or politics has always influenced [food-habits/literature]
3. Dr Samuel Johnson has been known for his work “.....”. [The Lives of the Poets/Volpone]
4. The English language used by Chaucer and Langland was from how later day authors used it. [same/different]
5. The method of studying the history of English literature reveals to us that the English language was used in a different way in earlier periods. [linguistic/pictorial]

1.4 LET US SUM UP

English literature is one of the widest literatures of the world. It is written in almost every country and thus it becomes very important to study its history to get an idea of how literature of the English language has grown and developed over the course of time. It is a fact that right from its very

beginning to the present time English literature has evolved in terms of language, style, form and content. Because of being written and published in a number of countries, the body of English literature is very large, and thus, it becomes very important for the readers and students to trace the development of English literature. Studying the history of English literature acquaints the readers or students with the various developments that took place in the realm of English literature. It also allows them to get familiar with the political, social and cultural history of the English nation. Thus, the history of English literature plays an important role in letting the readers or students know about the various ways in which English literature has evolved. As discussed above, English literature is a vast subject. It has a rich history. It has produced a great number of writers including some literary geniuses like Geoffrey Chaucer, William Shakespeare, John Milton, John Dryden, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lord Byron, John Keats, Charles Dickens, H. G. Wells, G. B. Shaw and many others. Because of its substantial body of literature, English literature has a rich and varied history. It has been enriched by the writings of numerous writers. Because of its vastness and abundant output, it is a daunting task to study the history of English literature. Therefore, certain methods have to be adopted to study the history of such a substantial body of literature. The four methods discussed above namely biographical, historical, literary and linguistic are the most basic and important methods to study and understand the history of English literature in a better way.

1.5 KEY WORDS

- Daunting: seeming difficult to deal with in prospect; intimidating.
- Linguistics: the scientific study of language and its structure, including the study of grammar, syntax, and phonetics.
- Biography: an account of someone's life written by someone else.
- Substantial: concerning the essentials of something.
- Transformation: a process by which one figure, expression, or function is converted into another one of similar value.

1.6 BOOKS SUGGESTED

1. History of English Literature by Legouis and Cazamian.
2. A Critical History of English Literature (Vol- I) by David Daiches.
3. An Introduction to the Study of English Literature by W. H. Hudson.

4. The Palgrave Guide to English Literature and Its Contexts by Peter Widdowson.
5. The Short Oxford History of English Literature by Andrew Sanders.
6. A Brief History of English Literature by John Peck and Martin Coyle.
7. History of English Literature by Edward Albert
8. A Short History of English Literature by Ifor Evans

ANSWERS

1. Existence
2. Literature
3. The Lives of the Poets
4. Different
5. linguistic

UNIT – 2

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EMPIRICAL AND LITERARY STUDY OF THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

STRUCTURE :

2.0. Objectives

2.1. Introduction

2.2. Why do we Study history?

2.2.1 Why Study history of English literature?

2.3. Characteristics of Empirical Study of the History of English literature

2.4. Characteristics of Literary Study of the History of English literature

2.5. Difference between Empirical and Literary Study of the history of English literature

2.6. Summary

2.7. Key Words

2.8. Let Us Sum Up

2.9. Books Suggested

Answers

2.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, we shall

- Understand importance of the study of history of English literature
- Discuss the difference between empirical and literary study of history of English literature After completing the unit, you should be able to
- Enlist benefits of studying history
- Identify the characteristics of empirical and literary study of the history of English literature
- Identify the difference between empirical and literary study of the history of English literature

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The study of history provides insights from the past. History includes all the aspects of life such as religion, culture, education, politics, society, arts, literature, so on and so forth. Each culture has particular ways of preserving its heritage. For example, largely the Western culture has documented its history in the written documents whereas the Eastern culture like India has preserved its past through oral literatures and manuscripts. While studying the history of literature, we are studying the cultural memory of a particular nation and its people. When we study the history of English literature, we come across various books. Some books focus on the archaeological evidence such as handwritten scripts of the authors, their monumental things, places they had been etc., whereas other books give a brief account of writers and their works during different periods of history. The first kind of history is called the ‘empirical study’ of history and the second kind of study of history is called the ‘literary study’. In this unit, we will discuss in detail the difference between the empirical and literary study of the history of English literature.

2.2 WHY DO WE STUDY HISTORY?

When someone studies history, he/she systematically examines different aspects of the past. It is about critically analysing past events for the betterment of the present and future. However, why do we have to study something that has gone by? The study of history is as important as a person’s memory. Imagine, you landed some money to your friend, and then you forget it! What will happen? You will lose the money if your friend does not return it. Or suppose, accidentally you fell into a pit yesterday in the market, today you are going again through that path and you forget yesterday’s incident. What will happen? Thus, to remember what is useful and what is harmful, we need to use memory. Among all the species, only the humans could cultivate dynamic memory. However, human memory is still very limited. When we want to remember something useful for the mass of people, we need to find out other means of remembering. Therefore, we write books, build monuments, sing songs of legends and tell stories of their glories.

2.2.1 Why Do We Study History Of English Literature?

Many things cannot be documented by the systematic means of history. Therefore, we need to look at other ways of remembering the past. For example, an excellent study of the literature of a particular period can very well tell us about the people of that time with their beliefs, customs, virtues, vices, ideology, social structures, etc.

The study of the history of English literature allows us to understand the culture and English society over a period. There are various reasons why the study of the history of English literature is significant. Firstly, we can see the development of English language during various phases of history and contribution of different authors to the development of grammar and vocabulary. Secondly, it allows us to understand literary, philosophical and ideological movements prevalent in the past. Thirdly, it gives us a comprehensive picture of different art forms and people tastes for the same. Lastly, the study of literary forms such as poems, stories, novels, plays and essays make us understand how English culture has developed into what it is today.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1

1. What is history?

2. Why do we study history?

3. What are two reasons of studying history of English literature?

2.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF EMPIRICAL STUDY OF THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

History is a story of the truth of the past. How do we know that whatever is written in the history books is the truth? Well, the simple answer is: there is empirical evidence that supports the factual truth of past events. Empirical evidence means evidence that can be seen, touched and measured. Whatever data (information) is available to the historian is analyzed and interpreted to verify the truth. Let us take an example; we find references to Globe Theatre of Shakespearean age, which is about

400 years from now. Was it there? How do we know? An empirical study of such data will take you to the location. When you visit the Globe Theatre, you would like to match the details given in the history books with what you observe. When the details are comparable, we can believe that the information is correct.

But what if you do not find the Globe Theatre? Then as an empirical historian, one should study the remains of the theatre, both physical and non-physical. For example, one can study books written before 300 years ago to check out whether there was any theatre like that. Then one can study books written before 200 years and then 100 years. Likewise, one can come to know precisely to what time the theatre was functional. One can also study the records maintained by the theatre such as details of the actors, dramatists, directors, helpers, their salaries, expenditures of the overall theatre etc. One can also meet present-day successors of the people who were associated with the Globe Theatre and know from them. For, they might have preserved the story of the theatre in their oral memory. Besides, one can study the books written by the archaeologists, folklorists, literary historians, etc. The function of an empirical study of history is to find out measurable proofs that claim certain things about the past. Thus, based on the above example, we deduce the following characteristics of an empirical study of the history of English literature:

1. Empirical study of history of English literature studies scientific and historical evidences of books, authors and events of the past.
2. It is highly objective in nature.
3. It includes more than one source of evidences.
4. The evidences should give almost same conclusion to other historians too.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – 2

- **Find out whether the following statements are true or false:**

1. Empirical study of history is a systematic inquiry of the past.
2. One evidence is enough for the study.
3. Empirical study of history of English literature seeks factual truth of the past.
4. Archeological study is not part of the empirical study.
5. The result of an empirical study of English literature is almost same for the other historians using the same method.

2.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF LITERARY STUDY OF THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

The literary study of the history of English literature focuses on the literary tastes of English society — for example, the lives of the poets, authors and playwrights of particular periods. In a literary study, the historian studies different periods in history — for example, Elizabethan Age, Restoration Age, The Puritan Age, etc. Moreover, what kind of literary genres were popular in what age? Who were the leading poets and writers? What were the major themes and styles they engaged with? Why were some literary trends more dominant than others? These are some of the questions that a literary historian explores.

For example, when we study David Daiches' *A Critical History of English Literature*, we find out a chronology of ages of English literature, discussion on the impact of socio-political aspects of the creative writers. To support his argument, David Daiches includes examples of poems, excerpts of passages, and publication details of the books. In all, we find that such books focus more on 1) information — what was written in terms of prose, poetry, drama etc, 2) context — socio-political scenario and 3) style — how literature was written e.g., genres, themes, language, styles, symbols, motifs, trends, etc. A literary study of English literature mostly includes books as sources of evidence. The conclusions derived from the fictional and non-fictional books are more interpretations than scientific statements. Therefore, each literary historian has a different viewpoint about the same author, event or trend of the history of English literature. Thus, based on the above discussion, we deduce the following characteristics of the literary study of the history of English literature:

1. Literary study of history of English literature gives description of the general literary tastes of the English society.
2. The focus of such a study is to generalize various literary periods, movements and impacts.
3. It includes fictional and non-fictional books as the sources of study.
4. The outcome of such a study is often interpretation of the literary events of past.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – 3

- **Find out whether the following statements are true or false:**

1. Literary study of history is a descriptive account of the past.
2. The focus of literary study of English literature does not provide periods of history.
3. Literary elements are given importance.

4. Everything is scientific in a literary study of history of English literature.
5. It is based on lab test of the evidences.

2.5 EMPIRICAL HISTORY AND LITERARY HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

As you have studied both kinds of history of English literature, we are very well aware of the key differences.

Difference	Empirical History	Literary History
Aim	To find out the factual truth of the history of English literature (e.g., Was there a Globe theatre?)	To find out chronological development of literary aspects of history English literature (How Globe theatre contributed to the development of English drama?)
Approach	Highly scientific (e.g., the study of the manuscripts of Shakespeare)	Highly narrative (e.g., the study of themes of plays of Shakespeare)
Procedure	It uses systematic procedure, which is based on several empirical sources (e.g., documents of Shakespeare's birth, education, income etc.).	It uses descriptive procedure, which is based on the books: fictional and non-fictional (e.g., books on Shakespeare's dramatic techniques).
Focus	To answer specific questions (e.g., Did Shakespeare actually write The Tempest?)	To answer general questions (e.g., Who were the major playwrights of Elizabethan Era)
Tools	Measurable tools such as archeological evidences, books, photographs (e.g., Shakespeare's writing desk, his clothes, his folios, etc.)	Words, poems, stories, plays, novels, history books (Hamlet, Macbeth, The Merchant of Venice, The Shakespeare Survey, A History of English Literature etc.)
Outcome	The end result is testable and verifiable. (e.g. the same result of the study of Shakespeare)	The end result is subject to multiple interpretations (e.g., different interpretations of the study of Shakespeare).

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 4

1. How does the aim of empirical study differ from the literary study of English literature?

2. In what way both the procedures vary?

3. What other examples which focus on between empirical history and literary history?

4. Why does the end result differ in both the studies?

5. Find out and write down names of five books of History of English literature with their author and publication details.

2.6. KEY WORDS

Empirical Study:	based on, concerned with, or verifiable by observation or experience rather than theory or pure logic.
Evidence:	the available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true or valid
Monument:	a statue, building, or other structure erected to commemorate a notable person or event.

Legend:	an extremely famous or notorious person, especially in a particular field
Ideology:	a system of ideas and ideals, especially one which forms the basis of economic or political theory and policy.
Remains:	the parts left over after other parts have been removed, used, or destroyed.
Playwright:	Dramatist
Objective:	Without any subjective prejudice
Archeological study:	the study of human history and prehistory through the excavation of sites and the analysis of physical remains
Deduce:	arrive at (a fact or a conclusion) by reasoning; draw as a logical conclusion

2.7. SUMMARY

Thus, the significant difference between the empirical and literary study of the history of English is in the goal and method the respective studies. We should remember that both kinds of studies are essential for the students of English literature. In fact, a good history of English literature will give you some empirical evidence too. Mostly, the study of the history of English literature will enable you to understand English poems, plays, stories, novels, essays etc., in a far better manner because history provides the contexts in which different genres are written.

2.8. LET US SUM UP

In this unit, you have learnt

- The importance of the study of history of English literature
- Characteristics of empirical and literary study of history of English literature
- Difference between empirical and literary study of history of English literature

2.9. BOOKS SUGGESTED

- 1) David Daiches. *A Critical History of English Literature*. Allied Publishers Pvt Ltd, 2005
- 2) Long, William J. *English Literature*. Atlantic Edition, 2015.

ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

1. History is a record of what happened in the past either in the written format or in other formats such as oral narrative and monuments.

2. The study of history is critical because it gives us the wisdom of the past so that we can make our future better. If we know the history, we do not repeat our mistakes of the past.
3. By studying the history of English literature, we come to know how the English language developed periodically. Secondly, the study of poems, stories, novels, plays and essays make us understand how English culture has developed into what it is today.

Check Your Progress 2

1. True
2. False
3. True
4. False
5. True

Check Your Progress 3

1. True
2. False
3. True
4. False
5. False

Check Your Progress 4

1. The principal aim of an empirical study of the history of English literature is to find out truth from the historical truth. Whereas the aim of the literary study of the history of English literature is to present a chronological and descriptive development literary aspects of history English literature. Thus, the empirical study focuses more on concrete aspect of history whereas literary study provides abstract aspects of the history of English literature.
2. The fundamental difference between the methods of both the studies is that in the empirical study, the historian observes, analyzes, tests and draws conclusions. In the literary study of the history of English literature, is studying other books (fictional and non-fictional) to write a new book. There is no room for any fiction in the empirical study of the history of English literature.
3. An empirical study of the history of English literature focuses on answering specific questions such as how many languages did Milton know? Where did he study them? Who were his teachers? What syllabus did he study? On the other hand, literary study of the history of English literature focuses on answering general questions such as what were the major themes of Metaphysical Poetry? What kind of language did Restoration Playwrights use?

4. The results of both studies differ because of their different aims and procedures. For example, the empirical study of the history of English literature tries to give scientific proof of what existed in the history of English literature. Whereas the literary study of the history of English literature tries to give a lengthy description of the significant phases of the development of English literature. Therefore, in the first case the result is testable and verifiable, and in the latter, the result is subject to multiple interpretations.
5. There are other books of history of English literature:
 1. History of English Literature by Edward Alber
 2. A History of English Literature by Robert Huntington Fletcher
 3. A History of English Literature by Michael Joseph Alexander
 4. History of English Literature by Legouis and Cazamian
 5. The Pelican Guide to English Literature, edited by Boris Ford

: STRUCTURE :**3.0 Objectives****3.1 Introduction****3.2 Historical Background****3.3 Cultural and Intellectual Background****3.4 Literary Background****3.5 Let Us Sum Up****3.6 Key words****3.7 Books Suggested****Answers**

3.0 OBJECTIVES

- To provide an overview of the age in which Geoffrey Chaucer lived and wrote.
- To provide background that helps to understand the social milieu of the Age of Chaucer.
- To enable the students to describe Chaucer's age-both medieval and modern and examine the literary and intellectual tendencies.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The unit will acquaint you with the different aspects of the Age of Chaucer which was the first significant period in the literary history of English literature. It was an age of transition from declining feudalism to an emerging money economy. This transition implies a shift from the medieval to the modern times, the emergence of the English nation from the dark ages to the age of enlightenment. Chaucer's age was the turbulent period – social, political, and religious challenges. In fact, the age of Chaucer was not stagnant: it was inching its way steadily and surely to the dawn of the Renaissance and the Reformation, which were yet a couple of centuries ahead. It was an age of restlessness, amid the ferment of new life that Chaucer lived and wrote.

3.2 THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (1350-1400)

The second half of the fourteenth century (1350-1400) is referred to in the history of English literature as the Age of Chaucer. The age has been named after its representative poet Geoffrey Chaucer. It was a period of transition. This transition implies a move from the medieval to the modern times, the emergence of the English nation from the “dark ages” to the age of enlightenment. In spite of the fact that a few components related with modernity were coming into prominence, yet essentially the age was medieval in outlook -unscientific, superstitious, chivalrous, religious-minded, and “backward” in many respects. The fourteenth century, as J. M. Manly puts it in *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, was “a dark epoch in the history of England”. Notwithstanding, the silve lining of modernity did “succeed in piercing, here and there, the thick haziness of ignorance and superstition. In fact, the age of Chaucer was not stagnant: it was crawling steadily and surely, to the dawn of the Renaissance and the Reformation, which were yet a two or three centuries ahead. In short, the fourteenth century was the age, when the seeds of modern age were being entrapped. Unrest and transition were the common features of this age. Geographical discoveries and the revolt against medieval traditions led towards the process of transition, which dates back to the second half of the fourteenth century. In the religious world, there was a serious outburst of unorthodoxy. In short, the Age of Chaucer marks the beginning of a new era, and new language and literature. It initiates a noticeable departure from medievalism and the birth of an era of rational inquiry and critical understanding. The main events and movements of the age of Chaucer can be described in the political, economic, social, religious and literary spheres.

Political Background

The Age of Chaucer includes the greater part of the reign of Edward III and the long French wars associated with his name the accession of his grandson Richard II (1377) and the revolution of 1399, the dethronement of Richard and the foundation of the Lancastrian dynasty.

The Hundred Years’ War

The long drawn out conflicts between England and France that occurred between 1337 and 1453 are collectively known as the “Hundred Years War”. In the course of this war Edward III secured English supremacy of the English Channel by the naval victory of Sluys (1340), established the prestige of the English soldiery and the military supremacy of the English

archers by the startling victory of Crecy (1346) and in 1347 captured Calais. A victory was won by his son the black prince at the Poitiers (September (1356) and Edward III was confirmed in the independent sovereignty of Aquitaine by the treaty of Bretigny in 1360. Edward III was the first king who conspicuously directed policy to commercial expansion, the security of the trade with Flanders being one of the object of his French wars. The war served one great purpose, that of fostering a new national pride among Englishman who had been living for long under the shadow of the French and had nearly forgotten this sense of national dignity. The victory at the battle of Crecy (1346) and of Poitiers (1356) kindled patriotism among largely won by the English yeoman, and middle class sprang up to ascendancy. It was this class rather than the knights of the aristocracy with their lances that determined the fate of war. The lowly archers rose in status and understood their power, power like a slippery feel slipped from the hands of the nobility. Froissart, the French chronicler, referring to the English archers says: "*They, let fly their arrows so wholly together and so thick that it seemed snow*". The recognition of the services of the humble archers brought in a note of democratization in the country, and the age-old "iron curtain" between the nobility and the proletariat developed a few chinks. This was an advance from medievalism to modernism.

An Upsurge of Nationalism

It was an age in which there was a great upsurge of nationalism, and England was emerging as a strong nation. It was the period of Hundred Years 'War. England won glorious victories at Crecy and Poitiers. This gave her self-confidence and fanned the patriotism of her people. England was also becoming a united nation. Wales and Ireland had been absorbed, and the conquest of Scotland completed the United Kingdom. At least for the time being, as Hudson remarks, "Every fresh triumph served to give further stimulus to national ambition and pride."

Foreign Trade

The democratic tendency spread like wild fire in every walk of life. As the trade and commerce expanded and the new towns sprang up, the middle class become repository and a storehouse of power, which hastened the decline of the old feudal system. Now a dissatisfied and discontented serf could become a freeman by establishing a legal residence in one of the towns. King Edward III realized that it was an important duty of the government to foster foreign trade. The chief export at that time was raw wool. Edward III made that city the sole centre for foreign sales and ordered that all wool should be shipped in English ships.

This helped to promote the growth of two more national industries - shipbuilding and seafaring. The other branch of the wool industry – the manufacture of cloth also began to make headway in England at this time.

3.3 CULTURAL AND INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND

The social structure of the Age of Chaucer was divided into the three conventional estates-the knight (nobility), the working man (the third estate) and the ecclesiastic (the church)

The Age of Chivalry

Chivalry was a system of ethical ideals developed among the knights of medieval Europe. Arising out of the feudalism of the period, it combined military virtues with those of Christianity, as epitomized by the Arthurian legend in England. The word chivalry comes from the French chevalier, meaning “horseman” or “knight.” Chivalry was the code of conduct by which knights were supposedly guided. In addition to military prowess, valor, and loyalty to God and the knight’s feudal lord, it called for courtesy toward enemies and generosity toward the sick and oppressed widows, and other disadvantaged people. Also incorporated in the ideal was courtly love — romantic devotion for a sexually unattainable woman, usually another man’s wife. Adoration for the Virgin Mary played a part in this concept. Chivalric ideals influenced the founding of religious military orders during the period of the Crusades, among them the Templars and the Hospitalers. In the late middle Ages, rulers formed secular orders of chivalry such as the English Order of the Garter (1349) and the Burgundian Order of the Golden Fleece (1429). By this time, however, chivalry had become largely a system of etiquette. Tournaments, in which knights had originally risked their lives in jousting combat before the ladies, became simply elaborate, stylized, and harmless entertainments. Moreover, the expense of this and other trappings of knighthood led many nobles who were eligible for knighthood not to become knights at all. From chivalry, always larger in literature than in life, comes the modern concept of the gentleman.

The age of Chaucer marked the highest development of medieval civilization in England. In fact, it was the midsummer of English chivalry. Although several changes in the life and thought of the people were taking place, in some respects, Chaucer’s England was still characteristically medieval, and nowhere is the conservative feeling more strongly marked than in the persistence of chivalry. This strange amalgam of love, war and religion i.e. chivalry, so far from exhibiting any signs of decay, reached perhaps its fullest development at this time. Compton-Rickett observes: Chaucer’s England is ‘Still characteristically medieval,

and nowhere is the conservative feeling more strongly marked than in the persistence of chivalry.

Courtly love

Courtly love is the code of romantic love that enjoyed a vogue among the aristocracies of Western Europe, particularly from the 12th to the 14th centuries. In its literary form, it involved a vassal-lord relationship under which the knight was his lady's obedient servant, prepared to overcome any obstacle or undergo any suffering to win her favor. Courtly love was always conducted outside wedlock and of necessity in secret; between spouses it was held to be impossible. Although the unattainability of the beloved was sometimes central to the ideal, its customs served equally well to dignify adultery. The convention is first encountered in the late 11th-century poetry of French Provençal troubadours, but its origins are far from clear. Ovid's *Art of Love* (c.1 B.C.) widely drawn upon by medieval minstrels, is one source. The Arabic *Ring of the Dove* (1022), by Ibn Hazm, which contains most of the ideas associated with courtly love, is probably another. Whatever the primary source of courtly love, a cross-fertilization of ideas and practices certainly occurred. The rise of the cult of Mary, for instance, coincided with it; the great respect given to her by the church was reflected in the admiration of the noblewoman prescribed by the secular code. The ideals of courtly love were most clearly defined in the English and French royal courts presided over by Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine and her daughter Marie de Champagne, under whose sponsorship some of the most famous books on the subject were written: Chrétien de Troyes's *Lancelot* and Guillaume de Lorris's *Le Roman de la Rose*. The convention influenced poets throughout Europe, notably Dante Alighieri and Petrarch in Italy and Geoffrey Chaucer in England, who in turn shaped the idea of courtly love to their own tastes and traditions. With the rise of the middle class, the ideals of courtly love were gradually merged into the institution of marriage, and through this reversal of the original values of courtly love, the concept has kept a stubborn, but altered, hold on the imaginations of most Westerners.

The Black Death, Peasants' Revolt, and Labour Unrest

In the age of Chaucer, most people were victims of poverty, squalor, and pestilence. Even well educated nobles eyed soap with suspicion, and learned physicians often forbade bathing as harmful for health! That is why England was often visited by epidemics, especially plague. The severest attack of this dread epidemic came in 1348. It was called "the Black Death" because black, knotty boils appeared on the bodies of the

hopeless victims. The sanitation in London was poor and living conditions were filthy. The River Thames brought more ships and infection to London, which spread to the rest of England. The crowded, dirty living conditions of the English cities led to the rapid spread of the disease. It is estimated that about a million human beings were swept away by this epidemic. That roughly makes one-third of the total population of England at that time. The oldest, youngest and poorest died first. Whole villages and towns in England simply ceased to exist after the Black Death.

One immediate consequence of this pestilence was the acute shortage of working hands. The socio-economic system of England lay hopelessly paralysed. Labourers who happened to survive started demanding much higher wages. But neither their employers nor the king nor Parliament was ready to meet these demands. A number of severe regulations were passed asking workers to work at the old rates of payment. This occasioned a great deal of resentment, which culminated in the Peasants' Revolt in 1381 during the reign of Richard II. The peasants groaning under the weight of injustice and undue official severity were led to London by the Kentish priest John Ball. He preached the dignity of labour and asked the nobles:

When Adam delved and Eve span

Who was then the gentleman?

The king, overawed by the mass of peasantry armed with such weapons as hatchets, spades, and pitchforks, promised reform but later shelved his promise. The "Peasants' Revolt" is, according to Compton-Rickett, "a dim foreshadowing of those industrial troubles that lay in the distant future." R. K. Root thus sums up the significance of this uprising: "This revolt, suppressed by the courage and good judgment of the boy King, Richard II, though barren of any direct and immediate result, exerted a lasting influence on the temper of the lower classes, fostering in them a spirit of independence which made them no longer a negligible quantity in the life of the nation". This was another line of progress towards modernism.

The Church

In the age of Chaucer, the Church became a hotbed of profligacy, corruption, and materialism. The overlord of the Church, namely, the Pope of Rome, himself had ambitions and aptitudes other than spiritual. W. H. Hudson maintains in this connection: "Of spiritual zeal and energy very little was now left in the country. The greater prelates heaped up wealth, and lived in a godless and worldly way; the rank and file of the clergy were ignorant and careless; the mendicant friars were notorious for

their greed and profligacy.” John Gower, a contemporary of Chaucer, whom he calls “moral Gower” thus pictures the condition of the Church in his Prologue to *Confessio Amantis*:

Lo, thus ye-broke is cristes Folde:
Whereof the flock without guide
Devoured is on every side,
In lacks of hem that been urrware In chepherdes, which her wit beware
Upon the world in other halve.

Another contemporary has to say this about the priests “Our priests are now become blind, dark and beclouded. There is neither shaven crown on their head, nor modesty in their words, nor temperance in their food, nor even chastity in their deeds.” If this was the condition of the ecclesiasts, we can easily imagine that of the laity. Well does Chaucer say in the Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*: “If gold rust, what shall iron do?” Chaucer himself was indifferent to any reform, but his character-sketches of the ecclesiastical figures in *The Canterbury Tales* leave no uncertainty regarding the corruption, which had crept into the ecclesiastical rank and file. The round-bellied epicurean monk, the merry and devil-may-care friar, and the unscrupulous pardoner are fairly typical of his age.

This widespread and deep-rooted corruption had already begun to provoke the attention of some reformists the most prominent of whom was John Wyclif (1320-84) who has been called “the morning star of the Reformation.” He started what is called the Lollards’s Movement. His aim was to eradicate the evil and corruption, which had become a part and parcel of the Church. He sent his “poor priests” to all parts of the country for spreading his message of simplicity, purity, and austerity. His self-appointed task was to take Christianity back to its original purity and spirituality. He exhorted people not to have anything to do with the corrupt ministers of the Pope and to have faith only in the Word of God as enshrined in the Bible, To make the teaching of the Bible accessible to the common masses he with the help of some of his disciples translated the Bible from Latin into the native tongue. He also wrote a number of tracts embodying his teaching. His translation of the Bible was, in the words of W. H. Hudson, “the first translation of the scriptures into any modern vernacular tongue.” That Chaucer was sympathetic to the Lollards’ Movement is evident from the element of idealization, which characterizes his portrait of the “Poor Parson” in the Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*. The movement launched by Wyclif and his followers in the age of Chaucer was an adumbration of the Reformation, which was

to come in the sixteenth century to wean England from the papal influence.

3.4 LITERARY TENDENCIES

The Age of Chaucer was the first significant period in the literary history of English literature. The period marks new era of new learning. Latin and French were the dominant languages in fourteenth-century England. However, in the later half of the century English came to its own, thanks to the sterling work done by Chaucer and some others like Langland, Gower, and Wacclif who wrote in English and wrote well. The English language itself was in a fluid state of being, and was divided into a number of dialects. The Universities of Cambridge and Oxford employed Latin as the medium of instruction. Latin was also the language of the fashionable who cultivated it as a social necessity. We recall here Chaucer's Summoner who "wolde speke no word but Latyn" after having drunk "well"! The contribution of Chaucer towards the standardization and popularization of the English language cannot be over-estimated. As regards his contribution to English poetry, he has well been characterised as the father of English poetry. No doubt, there were other poets contemporaneous with him Langland, Gower, and a few more, but Chaucer is as head and shoulders among them as Shakespeare is among the Elizabethan dramatists. The English prose, too, was coming to itself. Mandeville's travelogues and Wyclif's reformatory pamphlets give one a feeling that the English prose was on its way to standardization and popular acclamation.

In another way, too, the age of Chaucer stands between the medieval and the modern life. There was in this age some sort of a minor Renaissance. The dawn of the real Renaissance in England was yet about two centuries ahead, yet in the age of Chaucer there are signs of growing influence of the ancients on native literature. Chaucer's own poetry was influenced by the Italian writer Boccaccio (1313-75) and to a lesser extent, Petrarch (1304-74). The frameworks of Boccaccio's Decameron and of Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales are almost similar. However, it is somewhat doubtful if Chaucer had read the Italian writer. It was through the work of the two above-named Italian writers that humanism made its way into English intellectual culture. Compton-Rickett rightly observes: "Chaucer's world is medieval; but beneath his medievalism the leaven of the Renaissance is already at work."

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – 1

1. Chaucer's age was both medieval and modern. Explain.
2. Write a note on each of the following

- i. The Hundred Years' War
- ii. The Peasants' Revolt
- iii. The Black Death.

3. Write short notes on

- i. The customs of courtly love, chivalry, women and marriage in the Age of Chaucer .
- ii. Literary and intellectual tendencies of the Age of Chaucer .

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – 2

Choose appropriate option from given below.

1. Chaucer began to write “The Canter-bury Tales” in the year---

- (A) 1383
- (B) 1385
- (C) 1387
- (D) 1389

2. Who introduced “The Heroic Couplet into English Verse?

- (A) Lowett
- (B) Moody
- (C) Wycliffe
- (D) Chaucer

3. Chaucer was called, “The earliest of the great moderns” and was also called. “The morning star of the Renaissance” who initiated these remarks?

- (A) Hudson
- (B) Pope
- (C) Albert
- (D) Kittredge

4. In which year, “The Owl and The Nightingale” was published?

- (A) 1240
- (B) 1245
- (C) 1250
- (D) 1255

5. What does medieval Chivalry mean?

- (A) Criticism of women’s lovers
- (B) Indifference about women
- (C) Showy praise of women (a literary and poetic ideal)
- (D) Real and deep love for women

6. In which year the Normans lost their native land, Normandy and began to look upon England as their home?

- (A) 1200
- (B) 1202
- (C) 1204
- (D) 1206

7. “Ah ! freedom is a noble thing.” Who is composer of this line?

- (A) Chaucer
- (B) Barbour
- (C) Dauglos
- (D) Saintsbury

8. Name the poet of the following poems--

(i) Sir Gawayn and the green Knight (ii) Pearl (iii) Purity (iv) Patience.

- (A) John Gower
- (B) Anonymous
- (C) Langland
- (D) Coleridge

9. Which of the following is not a contemporary of Chaucer?

- (A) John Barbour
- (B) John Gower
- (C) John Mandeville
- (D) William Langland

10. Which of the following four dialects was to become the standard English or The King's English by the time of Chaucer?

- (A) The Northern
- (B) The East-Midland
- (C) The West-Midland
- (D) The Southern

11. John Gower was born in the year---

- (A) 1335
- (B) 1340
- (C) 1345
- (D) Unknown

12. In the social Background of the age of Chaucer, there were there medieval institutions. Which of the following is not included in them?

- (A) Feudalism
- (B) Imperialism
- (C) Church
- (D) Chivalry and Knight-errantry

13. Which of the following completed the United Kingdom? It means the last conquest of....

- (A) Wales
- (B) Ireland
- (C) Scotland
- (D) England

14. Which of the four following dialects was “The London Dialect”?

- (A) The Northern
- (B) The Southern
- (C) The East Midland
- (D) The West Midland

15. Chaucer expresses his age---

- (A) In fragments
- (B) By particular things
- (C) As a whole
- (D) Through chivalry

3.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, you have learnt about the age of Chaucer, a transitional one. Although the focus has been historical, ultimately you have learnt about the growth of towns, decline of chivalry, gender relations, people's beliefs, and the condition of the poor and varying literary ideals. In other words, you have acquired some idea of the life and values of the people at that time.

3.6 KEY WORDS

1. Transition: Change, Evolution, Shift
2. Upsurge: Rise, Gain, Expand
3. Nationalism: Patriotism, Jingoism
4. Chivalry: Politeness, Courtesy (for women)
5. Dawn: Daybreak, Before sunrise
6. Spiritual: Sacred, Pious, holy

3.7 BOOKS SUGGESTED

1. History of English Literature by Legouis and Cazamian.
2. A Critical History of English Literature (Vol– I) by David Daiches.
3. An Introduction to the Study of English Literature by W. H. Hudson.
4. The Palgrave Guide to English Literature and Its Contexts by Peter Widdowson.
5. The Short Oxford History of English Literature by Andrew Sanders.
6. A Brief History of English Literature by John Peck and Martin Coyle.
7. History of English Literature by Edward Albert
8. A Short History of English Literature by Ifor Evans

ANSWERS

1(B), 2(D), 3(C), 4(C), 5(C), 6(C), 7(B), 8(B), 9(C), 10(B), 11(D), 12(B), 13(C), 14(C), 15(C)

UNIT : 4**MAJOR WRITERS OF THE AGE OF CHAUCER****: STRUCTURE :****4.0 Objectives****4.1 Introduction****4.2 Major writers of the Age of Chaucer and their literary contribution****4.2.1 William Langland and Sir John Mandeville****4.2.2 John Wyclif and John Gower****4.2.3 John Lydgate, John of Trevisa and Nicholas Love****4.3 Life and Career of Chaucer****4.4 Let Us Sum Up****4.5 Key words****4.6 Books Suggested****Answers**

4.0 OBJECTIVES

- To introduce major writers of the Age of Chaucer and familiarize the students with their life,
- To enable to get detailed information about their literary works,
- To enable the students to critically evaluate the major literary works of the age.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

As noted in the preceding unit the Age of Chaucer was the first significant period in the literary history of English literature. The period marked a new era of new learning. Latin and French were the dominant languages in fourteenth-century England. However, in the later half of the century English came to its own, thanks to the sterling work done by Chaucer and some others like Langland, Gower, and Wyclif who wrote in English and wrote well.

Richard II was a great patron of the arts and a literary culture flourished at his court in the second half of the Fourteenth Century. Chaucer was widely known amongst the literati of the day, and his circle

included influential figures such as Sir Lewis Clifford, Sir Richard Stury and Sir John Montagu.

Often referred to as the 'Father of the English Language' Chaucer's poetry and use of English inspired a whole generation of poets. The dominance of French following the Norman conquest of 1066 had impeded the growth of English as a literary language for hundreds of years, and it was not until the Fourteenth Century that the vernacular came once more to be used as the language of choice in all areas of society, including at court and in business. Nonetheless, most writers – such as Gower – still wrote fluently in French and Latin, as well as in their native tongue. Chaucer proved that English could be written with elegance and power and it is thanks to his works that its prestige grew as a medium for serious literature. His poetry naturally inspired praise and imitation from his contemporaries. Of these admirers, the prolific John Lydgate is probably one of the best known today. A monk at the great Benedictine Abbey of St Edmund at Bury, he emulated Chaucer's style, and in the prologue to his *Siege of Thebes* even portrayed himself as meeting Chaucer's pilgrims at their inn in Canterbury. Although Lydgate's work has suffered from adverse criticism he played a crucial role in ensuring Chaucer's popularity throughout the Fifteenth Century.

4.2 MAJOR WRITERS OF THE AGE OF CHAUCER AND THEIR LITERARY CONTRIBUTION

4.2.1 William Langland and Sir John Mandeville

The English poet William Langland (ca. 1330-ca. 1400) is known as the probable author of "Piers Plowman," an allegorical poem which attacks abuses in the government and the Church and deplores the misery of a people without true leadership. One of the greatest examples of Middle English alliterative poetry, this is an allegorical work with a complex variety of religious themes. One of the major achievements of *Piers Plowman* is that it translates the language and conceptions of the cloister into symbols and images that could be understood by the layman. In general, the language of the poem is simple and colloquial, but some of the author's imagery is powerful and direct. Langland voiced the social discontent and preached the equality of men and the dignity of labor.

Almost nothing is known of Langland himself, and if he authored any other works of literature they are no longer known to us. Nonetheless, on the basis of *Piers Plowman* alone, Langland is one of the most important figures in Middle English literature. Langland was writing during a period of significant cultural and linguistic change in England. The English language itself had been rapidly changing as a result of the Norman

Conquest and increased interaction with the European continent; and English culture had entered a period of significant strife. The rampant corruption of medieval Roman Catholicism had incited a great deal of unrest among the English populace, and a number of authors, Langland among them, would directly address their own thoughts on Christianity, the Church, and the state of England as a whole through the medium of poetic allegory. In so doing, *Piers Plowman* became (intentionally or not) a rallying-point for one of the largest revolts in medieval history, and the poem would be appropriated by a number of radicals throughout England.

Sir John Mandeville is the pen name used by the unidentified 14th-century English author of one of the most famous and widely read travel romances of Europe—**The Voyage and Travels of Sir John Mandeville, Knight**.. He probably wrote his travels first in Latin, next in French, and then turned them into English. The tales are selections from the narratives of genuine travelers, embellished with Mandeville's additions and described as his own adventures. The book is a kind of guide-book to the Holy Land; but the writer himself went much farther east, and reached China, in fact. *Mandeville's Travels* was much admired, read, and copied; indeed, hundreds of manuscript copies of his book were made. There are nineteen still in the British Museum.

Originally written in Norman French about 1360 and translated into 10 major European languages, including English and Latin, by the end of the century, the *Travels* enjoyed undiminished popularity for over 400 years. Purporting to be a travel guide emphasizing the exotic wonders of the Near and Far East, it is generally considered one of the finest works of imaginative literature of the medieval period.

4.2.2 John Wyclif and John Gower

Among the great contemporaries of Chaucer, few deserve more attention than John Wyclif (1327-1384), for he was one of the first Englishmen to challenge the authority of the Catholic Church. He was the most influential prose writer of the fourteenth century. His fame rests upon his complete translation of the Bible. This work was finished in 1383, just one year before his death. However, the translation was not done by himself alone, but a number of men worked on it under his supervision. Though often copied in manuscript, it was not printed for several centuries. Wyclif's *New Testament* was printed in 1731, and the Old Testament not until the year 1850. But the words and the style of his translation, which was read and re-read by hundreds of thoughtful men, were of real and permanent service in fixing the form of the English language. Wyclif held that the pretensions had raised a barrier between man and God; and both by pen and

in pulpit he endeavored to break it down. Free access to the Bible was what the spiritual life required.

John Gower (c. 1330 – 1408) was an English poet, and the Pearl Poet, and a personal friend of Geoffrey Chaucer. He is remembered primarily for three major works, the *Mirour de l'Omme*, *Vox Clamantis*, and *Confessio Amantis*, three long poems written in French, Latin, and English respectively, which are united by common moral and political themes. Gower criticized this vigorous life and plainly afraid of its consequences. John Gower was a person of shrewd business instincts with a large amount of landed property in East Anglia. Some authorities have inclined to prove him as a lawyer, but M.G.C. Macaulay, his biographer, suggests that he made his money as a merchant; judging by the way in which he speaks of "City", and the number of merchants with whom he was in personal communication. However that may be, it is clear that about middle life he is concerned entirely with the management of his estates and the writing of books. His sympathies were aristocratic and conservative, and the Peasants' Revolt horrified him exceedingly, not, merely as an upholder of law and order, but as a landlord with vested interests.

Gower's chief works were *Speculum Hominids*, written in French; the *Vex Clamantis*, written in Latin; and *The Confessio Amantis*, written in English. The first is a poem of some 30,000 lines, somewhat in the nature of a Morality. The Vices and Virtues are classified, and a picture of society is drawn. For its improvement, Gower looks to the intervention of the Blessed Virgin. Historically, the work is of small value, but, as in Langland and Chaucer, there are interesting sidelights on city life.

His another work the *Vex Clamantis* written in Latin was occasioned by the Rising of 1381. It consists of seven books; the first book describing the wilderness in which this medieval Baptist cries. In later books, he pictures the common people as having lost their reason and being transformed into wild beasts. Poor Tyler is suggested as an elephantine boar, later on as a jay who has learnt to speak. Throughout the poem, politics and theology are intermingled, the later books dealing with man's responsibility towards man. The author divides people into three classes; clerk, soldier, and ploughman; he criticizes the clergy as freely as Langland does- a significant testimony to the corruption of the Medieval Church. And the satirical touch that wealth and wisdom for them are not synonymous, is worthy of Carlyle. Gower used the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 in this long Latin poem to describe the faults of government and the various classes of society. Caused by a complex interaction of social discontents, the Revolt was a brief but horrific episode of anarchic insurrection. The rebels (not all of them peasants) plundered London, massacred a group of Flemings, and murdered the Archbishop of Canterbury. The earlier portion of the *Vox*

Clamantis contains a vivid account of this uprising in the form of an allegory, with a somewhat hysterical portrayal of the rebels as domestic animals reverting to bestiality. Chaucer himself only makes one passing reference to the Revolt in a facetious remark about Jack Straw, one of its main leaders, in the Nun's Priest's Tale. Nonetheless, as a member of the upper class, he probably shared Gower's view of the rebels as being a lawless rabble.

The Confessio Amantis is Gower's most acclaimed English work. Completed in its first version in 1390, when Gower was about sixty, it is a lover's account of his confession to Genius, the priest of Venus, under headings supplied by the seven deadly sins. Gower uses a number of stories with the definite intention of telling the people what are the rudiments of good morality. According to the original prologue, Gower wrote the book for Richard II after the king asked him for a poem on the theme of love. Two or three years later, the reference to Richard was cut out, presumably because of his growing unpopularity. Gower then wrote another version of the prologue in which he says that the work was written for 'Engelondes sake'.

It is clear, from the drift of the poem, that the writer is opposed to social reform. In telling the stories he is clear and straightforward. Gower points the moral "to adorn a tale."

4.2.3 John Lydgate, John of Trevisa and Nicholas Love

Lydgate is credited with some 145,000 lines of verse, almost a quarter of which is contained in the *Fall of Princes*, his longest single work. The poem is a greatly amplified version of Laurent de Premierfait's translation of Boccaccio's *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium*, with additions from a variety of sources including the Bible, Ovid and other works by Boccaccio. The result is a universal encyclopaedia of history and mythology, somewhat ponderous in tone and exhaustively fleshed out with moral teaching. The work was commissioned from Lydgate in 1431 by Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, younger brother of Henry V and Protector of England during the minority of Henry VI, and it occupied the following eight years of his life.

Lydgate wrote religious poetry throughout his career. The quasi-liturgical *Life of Our Lady* was probably composed for Henry V in about 1415-16. A genuinely devout composition written in the 'high style', the work draws upon the Apocryphal Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, as well as other devotional texts such as the *Meditationes Vitae Christi*. It has been praised for its religious intensity and luminous rhetoric.

John of Trevisa is chronicled in the history of English literature as a translator of an originally Latin work *Ranulf Higden Polychronicon*.

Originally composed in Latin, this universal history is a chronicle of the period from the Creation to 1357. Its author was a Benedictine monk who arranged the work into seven books, in imitation of the seven days of Genesis. This translation was made by John of Trevisa (c.1330-1412) and completed in 1387. There was an increasing interest in history throughout the late medieval period, and Trevisa's version was just one of several standard vernacular histories available. His translation is interesting for the additional comments that he makes to update the original text. Where Higden, for example, discusses the fact that children learn their lessons in French, Trevisa comments that the situation has changed by the time he is writing, and that lessons are now conducted in English. He acknowledges that this has its advantages for speed of learning, but points out rather disapprovingly that now children 'know no more French than their left heel, and that is harmful for them if they should pass the sea and work in strange lands'.

Nicholas Love (d. 1424), a prior of the Carthusian Priory of Mount Grace in Yorkshire, is known for his translation work *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, originally written in Latin as *The Meditationes Vitae Christi*. The holy text describing the devotional life of Christ was extremely popular throughout medieval Europe. *The Mirror* is a free translation of the work. Concentrating on the Passion, the Mirror dispenses meditative and doctrinal comment on the Bible. Its sixty-three chapters are each split into seven sections, every section representing a day of the week.

4.3 GEOFFREY CHAUCER: HIS LIFE AND WORKS

Above all there was Geoffrey Chaucer, a scholar, traveler, business man, courtier, sharing in all the stirring life of his times, and reflecting it in literature as no other but Shakespeare has ever done. Chaucer was born in London sometime between 1340 and 1344 to John Chaucer and Agnes Copton. John Chaucer was an affluent wine merchant and deputy to the king's butler. Through his father's connections, Geoffrey held several positions early in his life, serving as a noblewoman's page, a courtier, a diplomat, a civil servant, and a collector of scrap metal. His early life and education were not strictly documented although it can be surmised from his works that he could read French, Latin, and Italian.

In 1359, Chaucer joined the English army's invasion of France during the Hundred Years' War and was taken prisoner; King Edward III of England paid his ransom in 1360. In 1366, Chaucer married Philipa de Roet, who was a lady-in-waiting to Edward III's wife. In 1367, Chaucer was given a life pension by the king, and began traveling abroad on diplomatic missions. During trips to Italy in 1372 and 1378, he discovered

the works of Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch—each of which greatly influenced Chaucer's own literary endeavors.

Chaucer was named Controller of Customs on wools, skins, and hides for the port of London in 1374, and continued in this post for twelve years. Around that time, Chaucer's period of Italian influence began, which includes transitional works such as *Anelida and Arcite* (c. 1379), *Parlement of Foules* (c. 1382), and *Troilus and Criseyde* (c. 1385). Chaucer established residence in Kent, where he was elected a justice of the peace and a member of Parliament in 1386. His wife died the following year.

His period of artistic maturity is considered to begin at this time, marked by the writing of the General Prologue of the *Canterbury Tales*, which Chaucer continued to work on for many years—most likely until his death in 1400. Considered a cultural touchstone, if not the very wellspring of literature in the English language, Chaucer's tales gather twenty-nine archetypes of late-medieval English society and present them with insight and humor.

Now considered the "Father of English literature," Chaucer wrote in the English vernacular while court poetry was still being written in Anglo-Norman or Latin. The decasyllabic couplet Chaucer used for most of the *Canterbury Tales* later evolved into the heroic couplet, commonly used for epic and narrative poetry in English. Chaucer is also credited with pioneering the regular use of iambic pentameter.

As the American poet and essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote in his essay "The Poet" in 1844: "...the rich poets, such as Homer, Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Raphael, have obviously no limits to their works, except the limits of their lifetime, and resemble a mirror carried through the street, ready to render an image of every created thing."

Until less than a year before his death, Chaucer remained Clerk of Works of the Palace of Westminster. He leased a tenement in the garden of the Lady Chapel of Westminster Abbey. After his death, he was buried at the entrance to the chapel of St. Benedict, in the South Transept. In 1556, a monument was erected in Chaucer's honor. When the Elizabethan poet Edmund Spenser died in 1599 and was buried nearby, the tradition of the "Poets' Corner" in the Abbey began. Since then, more than thirty poets and writers are buried there—including Browning, Dryden, Hardy, Jonson, and Kipling—and more than fifty others are memorialized.

Chaucer's works are sometimes grouped into first French period, then Italian period and finally an English period, with Chaucer being influenced by those countries' literatures in turn.

The French Period

First is that of French influence, when, though writing in English, he drew inspiration from the rich French poetry of the period, which was produced partly in France, partly in England. Chaucer experimented with the numerous lyric forms which the French poets had brought to perfection; he also translated, in whole or in part, the most important of medieval French narrative poems, the thirteenth century '*Romance of the Rose*' of Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, a very clever satirical allegory, in many thousand lines, of medieval love and medieval religion. This poem, with its Gallic brilliancy and audacity, long exercised over Chaucer's mind the same dominant influence, which it possessed over most secular poets of the age. Another is '*The Book of the Duchess*'. This book was written on the death of the Duchess Blanche of Lancaster, the wife of John of Gaunt. It was an elegy. Chaucer was actually moved as she was his patroness and he wanted to please John of Gaunt. *The Complaint unto Pity*, *The Complaint of Mars*, *Queen Anelida*.

The Italian Period

Chaucer's second period, that of Italian influence, dates from his first visit to Italy in 1372-3, where at Padua he may perhaps have met the fluent Italian poet Petrarch, and where at any rate the revelation of Italian life and literature must have aroused his intense enthusiasm. From this time, and especially after his other visit to Italy, five years later, he made much direct use of the works of Petrarch and Boccaccio and to a less degree of those of their greater predecessor, Dante, whose severe spirit was too unlike Chaucer's for his thorough appreciation. During this period he wrote *Troilus and Criseyde*. It is believed that this is partly based upon and partly a translation of Boccaccio's *Filostrato*. It contained 8200 lines of rime royal. It is the longest poem. It is famous for comical character of Pandarus. Other book of this phase is *The Parliament of Fowls*. This is a mixture of mythology, allegory and sentimentality. It's a 700 lines long poem and was written in honour of Richard II's marriage with Anne of Bohemia. Other work is *The House of Fame*, which shows the clear influence of Dante. Lydgate later called this poem Dante in English. This contains highly autobiographical elements.

The English Period

Chaucer's third period, covering his last fifteen years, is called his English period, because now at last his genius, mature and self-sufficient, worked in essential independence. First in time among his poems of these years stands *The Legend of Good Women*, a series of romantic biographies of famous ladies of classical legend and history, whom it pleases Chaucer

to designate as martyrs of love; but more important than the stories themselves is the Prolog, where he chats with delightful frankness about his own ideas and tastes. The English period displays his originality and genius with full flowering. It has most impressive work of his life which has immortalized him. This work is 'The Canterbury Tales'. In Italy, Chaucer met writer Giovanni Boccaccio, and it is believed Chaucer got his inspiration for the Canterbury Tales from Boccaccio's Decameron. Twenty-nine pilgrims met in an inn called 'The Tabard Inn'. They were bound to visit the shrine of St. Thomas Becket at Canterbury. The group of pilgrims included poet also. All were in jolly mood. They were welcomed by host, Harry Bailly. Chaucer's frame is a religious pilgrimage during which each traveler is to tell story. They would tell two stories when they go and two when they return. Although the work was never completed, The Canterbury Tales is considered one of the greatest works in the English language. He is the photographer who shoots in all directions. He sets some pilgrims from various walks of life together on a pilgrimage in his Canterbury Tales. Instead of creating a make-believe world, he takes real and concrete characters of the world to give a complete picture.

The great work of the period, however, and the crowning achievement of Chaucer's life, is 'The Canterbury Tales.' Every one is familiar with the plan of the story (which may well have had some basis in fact): how Chaucer finds himself one April evening with thirty other men and women, all gathered at the Tabard Inn in Southwark (a suburb of London and just across the Thames from the city proper), ready to start next morning, as thousands of Englishmen did every year, on a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Thomas a Becket at Canterbury. The travelers readily accept the proposal of Harry Bailey, their jovial and domineering host, that he go with them as leader and that they enliven the journey with a story-telling contest (two stories from each pilgrim during each half of the journey) for the prize of a dinner at his inn on their return. Next morning, therefore, the Knight begins the series of tales and the others follow in order. This literary form--a collection of disconnected stories bound together in a fictitious framework--goes back almost to the beginning of literature itself; but Chaucer may well have been directly influenced by Boccaccio's famous book of prose tales, 'The Decameron' (Ten Days of Story-Telling). Between the two works, however, there is a striking contrast, which has often been pointed out. While the Italian author represents his gentlemen and ladies as selfishly fleeing from the misery of a frightful plague in Florence to a charming villa and a holiday of unreflecting pleasure, the gaiety of Chaucer's pilgrims rests on a basis of serious purpose, however conventional it may be.

Chaucer's personality stands out in his writings plainly and most delightfully. It must be borne in mind that, like some others of the greatest poets, he was not a poet merely, but also a man of practical affairs, in the eyes of his associates first and mainly a courtier, diplomat, and government official. His wide experience of men and things is manifest in the life-likeness and mature power of his poetry, and it accounts in part for the broad truth of all but his earliest work, which makes it essentially poetry not of an age but for all time. Something of conventional medievalism still clings to Chaucer in externals, as we shall see, but in alertness, independence of thought, and a certain directness of utterance, he speaks for universal humanity. His practical experience helps to explain as well why, unlike most great poets, he does not belong primarily with the idealists. Fine feeling he did not lack; he loved external beauty--some of his most pleasing passages voice his enthusiasm for Nature; and down to the end of his life, he never lost the zest for fanciful romance. His mind and eye were keen, besides, for moral qualities; he penetrated directly through all the pretenses of falsehood and hypocrisy; while how thoroughly he understood and respected honest worth appears in the picture of the Poor Parson in the Prolog to 'The Canterbury Tales.' Himself quiet and self-contained, moreover, Chaucer was genial and sympathetic toward all mankind. But all this does not declare him a positive idealist, and in fact, rather, he was willing to accept the world as he found it--he had no reformer's dream of 'shattering it to bits and remoulding it nearer to the heart's desire.' His moral nature, indeed, was easy-going; he was the appropriate poet of the Court circle, with very much of the better courtier's point of view. At the day's tasks he worked long and faithfully, but he also loved comfort, and he had nothing of the martyr's instinct. To him human life was a vast procession, of boundless interest, to be observed keenly and reproduced for the reader's enjoyment in works of objective literary art. The countless tragedies of life he noted with kindly pity, but he felt no impulse to dash himself against the existing barriers of the world in the effort to assure a better future for the coming generations. In a word, Chaucer is an artist of broad artistic vision to whom art is its own excuse for being. And when everything is said few readers would have it otherwise with him; for in his art he has accomplished what no one else in his place could have done, and he has left besides the picture of himself, very real and human across the gulf of half a thousand years. Religion, we should add, was for him, as for so many men of the world, a somewhat secondary and formal thing. In his early works, there is much conventional piety, no doubt sincere so far as it goes; and he always took a strong intellectual interest in the problems of medieval theology; but he became steadily and quietly independent in his philosophic outlook and indeed rather skeptical of all

definite dogmas. Even in his art, Chaucer's lack of the highest will-power produced one rather conspicuous formal weakness; of his numerous long poems he really finished scarcely one. For this, however, it is perhaps sufficient excuse that he could write only in intervals hardly snatched from business and sleep. In 'The Canterbury Tales' indeed, the plan is almost impossibly ambitious; the more than twenty stories actually finished, with their eighteen thousand lines, are only a fifth part of the intended number.

In nothing are Chaucer's personality and his poetry more pleasing than in the rich humor which pervades them through and through. Sometimes, as in his treatment of the popular medieval beast-epic material in the Nun's Priest's Tale of the Fox and the Cock, the humor takes the form of boisterous farce; but much more often it is of the finer intellectual sort, the sort which a careless reader may not catch, but which touches with perfect sureness and charming lightness on all the incongruities of life, always, too, in kindly spirit. No foible is too trifling for Chaucer's quiet observation; while if he does not choose to denounce the hypocrisy of the Pardoner and the worldliness of the Monk, he has made their weaknesses sources of amusement (and indeed object-lessons as well) for all the coming generations.

Chaucer is one of the greatest of all narrative poets. Chaucer is an exquisite lyric poet, but only a few of his lyrics have come down to us, and his fame must always rest largely on his narratives. Here, first, he possesses unfailing fluency. It was with rapidity, evidently with ease, and with masterful certainty, that he poured out his long series of vivid and delightful tales. It is true that in his early, imitative, work he shares the medieval faults of wordiness, digression, and abstract symbolism; and, like most medieval writers, he chose rather to reshape material from the great contemporary store than to invent stories of his own. But these are really very minor matters. He has great variety, also, of narrative forms: elaborate allegories; love stories of many kinds; romances, both religious and secular; tales of chivalrous exploit, like that related by the Knight; humorous extravaganzas; and jocose renderings of coarse popular material--something, at least, in virtually every medieval type.

The thorough knowledge and sure portrayal of men and women which, belong to his mature work extend through, many various types of character. It is a commonplace to say that the Prolog to 'The Canterbury Tales' presents in its twenty portraits virtually every contemporary English class except the very lowest, made to live forever in the finest series of character sketches preserved anywhere in literature; and in his other work the same power appears in only less conspicuous degree.

His poetry is also essentially and thoroughly dramatic, dealing very vividly with life in genuine and varied action. To be sure, Chaucer

possesses all the medieval love for logical reasoning, and he takes a keen delight in psychological analysis; but when he introduces these things (except for the tendency to medieval diffuseness), they are true to the situation and really serve to enhance the suspense. There is much interest in the question often raised whether, if he had lived in an age like the Elizabethan, when the drama was the dominant literary form, he too would have been a dramatist.

As a descriptive poet (of things as well as persons), he displays equal skill. Whatever his scenes or objects, he sees them with perfect clearness and brings them in full life-likeness before the reader's eyes, sometimes even with the minuteness of a nineteenth century novelist. And no one understands more thoroughly the art of conveying the general impression with perfect sureness, with a foreground where a few characteristic details stand out in picturesque and telling clearness.

Chaucer is an unerring master of poetic form. His stanza combinations reproduce all the well-proportioned grace of his French models, and to the pentameter-riming couplet of his later work, he gives the perfect ease and metrical varieties which match the fluent thought. In all his poetry, there is probably not a single faulty line. And yet within a hundred years after his death, such was the irony of circumstances, English pronunciation had so greatly altered that his meter was held to be rude and barbarous, and not until the nineteenth century were its principles again fully understood. His language, we should add, is modern, according to the technical classification, and is really as much like the form of our own day as like that of a century before his time; but it is still only early modern English, and a little definitely directed study is necessary for any present-day reader before its beauty can be adequately recognized

Chaucer significantly contributed to the development of English as a literary language. The “General Prologue” to *The Canterbury Tales* has often been praised as “the most perfect poem in the English language.” The *Canterbury Tales* and his other notable works—including *The Book of the Duchess*, *The Parlement of Foules*, *The House of Fame*, and *Troilus and Criseyde*—reflect Chaucer's familiarity with French, English, Italian, and Latin literature, and demonstrate his consummate mastery of a variety of literary genres, styles, and techniques. The originality of his language and style, the vivacity of his humor, and the depth of his understanding are continually cited as reasons for the permanence of his works.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-1

1. Write note on the following.

- i. Contemporaneity in John Gower's literary works

ii. Significance of the writings of William Langland

2. Write an analytical note on the prose of the Age of Chaucer.
3. Give reasons for calling Chaucer the 'Father of Modern English Poetry'.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-2

Chose Appropriate Options from Given Below:

1. "Chaucer was not in any sense a poet of the people." Who says like this?

- (A) Lowett
- (B) Hadow
- (C) Hudson
- (D) A.C. Ward

2. Who has been called the "Prince of Plagiarists"?

- (A) Ifor Evans
- (B) Hardin Craig
- (C) Chaucer Geoffrey
- (D) Bernard Groom

3. Who was called the first Protestant and the father of the English-Reformation? He may be called with equal Justice the father of English Prose -

- (A) Pope
- (B) John Wycliffe
- (C) John Barbour
- (D) Marlowe

4. Which of the following books was written by a French-Physician, Jean De Bourgone?

- (A) Sir Gawayn and The Green Knight
- (B) Pamela
- (C) Travels of Sir John Mandeville
- (D) Bible

5. Who was the first to translate the Bible into English? He used the Latin version of the Bible.

- (A) William Langland
- (B) John Wycliffe
- (C) Arnold
- (D) C.H. Mair

6. How many characters are there in The Prologue?

- (A) 25
- (B) 29
- (C) 31
- (D) 39

7. Who were “Lollards”?

- (A) The force of the King
- (B) The followers of Chaucer
- (C) The followers of John Wycliffe
- (D) Agitators of Peasant’s Revolt

8. “It is an encyclopedia of the art of Love “Which of the following”?

- (A) Pamela
- (B) Merchant
- (C) Confession Amantis
- (D) Bible

9. Who is known as the father of English Literature ?

- (A) Langland
- (B) Chaucer
- (C) Edward III
- (D) More

10. Before English, which language was the language of court and nobility?

- (A) Italian
- (B) Greek
- (C) French
- (D) German

11. Chaucer is known much for his

- (A) Realism
- (B) Dialogue

- (C) Action
- (D) Uniformity

12. Chaucer first used his rhyme-royal stanza in his

- (A) The Canterbury Tales
- (B) The Book of Duchess
- (C) The House of Fame
- (D) Triolus and Criseyde

13. Which of the following tales is in prose?

- (A) The Parson's Tale
- (B) The Wife of Bath's Tale
- (C) The Cook's Tale
- (D) The Squire's Tale

14. The first poem in English to use heroic couplet is

- (A) The Legend of Good Women
- (B) The House of Fame
- (C) The Parliament of Fowls
- (D) The Book of Duchess

15. Who tells the last tale in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales?

- (A) The Monk
- (B) The Parson
- (C) The Prioress
- (D) The Nun

4.4 LET US SUM UP

The spirit of new learning accelerated the transition from the medieval to the modern. This was the spirit of the Italian Renaissance, which was to reach its full blossoming in England only during the Age of Queen Elizabeth. Chaucer played a most important role in the importing of this spirit from Italy to England. There was vast intellectual awakening and an unprecedented spurt of literary activity. It was the heyday of English poetry. English became a national language from a dialect. The age also witnessed the foundation of an English prose style. Humanism was one of the potent formative influences of the age of Chaucer.

4.5 KEY WORDS

- | | |
|------------|-----------------------------|
| Allegory | : Parable, Symbol, Metaphor |
| Transition | : Change, Evolution , Shift |

Upsurge	: Rise, Expand, Surge
Nationalism	: Patriotism
Chivalry	: Respect, Courtesy, Politeness (For Women)
Religious	: Spiritual, Sacred, holy
Consummate	: Skillful, expert

4.6 BOOKS SUGGESTED

1. History of English Literature by Legouis and Cazamian.
2. A Critical History of English Literature (Vol– I) by David Daiches.
3. An Introduction to the Study of English Literature by W. H. Hudson.
4. The Palgrave Guide to English Literature and Its Contexts by Peter Widdowson.
5. The Short Oxford History of English Literature by Andrew Sanders.
6. A Brief History of English Literature by John Peck and Martin Coyle.
7. History of English Literature by Edward Albert
8. A Short History of English Literature by Ifor Evans
9. "The Beginnings of English Prose," by Alice D. Greenwood, in volume 2 of The Cambridge History of English Literature

ANSWERS

1(C) ,2(C), 3(B), 4(C), 5(B), 6(B), 7(C), 8(C), 9(B), 10(C), 11(),12(D)
,13(A), 14(A), 15(B)

UNIT 5**ELIZABETHAN AGE-1 (1558 - 1603)**
(HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND
CHARACTERISTICS)**STRUCTURE****5.0 Objectives****5.1 Introduction****5.2 Historical Background****5.2.1 Political Environment During Elizabethan Era****5.2.2 Cultural Background****5.3 Elizabethan Poetry****5.4 Elizabethan Drama****5.5 Elizabethan Prose****5.6 Let Us Sum Up****5.7 Key Words****5.8 Books Suggested****Answers**

5.0 OBJECTIVES

- To discuss the historical background of the Elizabethan period
- To discuss the major literary characteristics of the Elizabethan period
- To discuss the development of poetry, prose and drama in the Elizabethan period

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Elizabethan Age comprises the period of Queen Elizabeth's reign i.e. 1558 to 1603. Jacobean and Caroline periods begin after this Golden period in the history of England. Elizabethan age has been considered to be the age of change and discovery along with the extension of various literary forms including poetry, prose and drama. In addition to this, Elizabethan age has also witnessed drastic revolution and upheavals in social, historical, political and religious areas. Moreover, this age is also considered as an era of great development in areas like commerce, sea adventures, and nationalist feeling of English people in general and England as a nation in particular.

5.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Accession of Queen Elizabeth on the English Throne in 1558 marked the beginning of this great age. Milton has beautifully described this age in his words like, “We suddenly see England, a noble and puissant nation, rousing herself, like strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks.”

One of the most remarkable incidents that filled England as a nation with the great spirit of Patriotism was defeating “The invincible Spanish Armada” by an English naval force under the command of Lord Charles Howard and Sir Francis Drake. According to www.history.com website, “Queen Elizabeth’s decisive defeat of the Invincible Armada made England a world-class power and introduced effective long-range weapons into naval warfare for the first time, ending the era of boarding and close-quarter fighting”. With this we can clearly see that the whole English was completely filled with patriotism and this influence can be seen in the works of all the prominent writers of this era. There has been quite a few important works highlighting the historic background of Elizabethan age. According to L G Salinger, “There were popular Moralities satirizing abuses, in which history was subordinate to general social ethics: the Armada battle in Wilson’s *Three Lords of London* (1589) for instance, is reduced to a symbolic episode (a struggle for shields) while the legendary Kings in *A Knack to know a Knave* (1592) or *Nobody and Somebody* (c.1606) are merely vague ciphers for the magistrate in general.” (Pg- 62-63) In addition to this it has been said that even Spenser used historical background of England in his famous work *Faerie Queen* just to impress or flatter the queen. Moreover, England during her reign faced Nine year war within Spain (1594 to 1603) and on this Shrinivasa Iyengar says “War was no doubt evil, but civil strife was the worst curse of all, and its spectre was seldom very far from the consciousness of the Elizabethans.”

Further, it can be marked that Expansion of horizon was one of the most important features of this age and on this Shrinivasa Iyengar has said, “The discovery – partly by design, partly by accident- of the ocean routes to the East and, more important still, the discovery of the New World, made England’s situation central between the Old World and The New, whereas it had hitherto been considered merely peripheral to the known world?”

Some of the most important historical events of Elizabethan Age were:

1558 - Accession of Queen Elizabeth to the throne of England

1571 - Rise of English Puritans

1577 - Drake’s famous voyages

1587 - *Execution of Mary Queen of Scots*
 1588 - *Defeat of Spanish Armada*
 1594—1603 - *The English War with Spain (The Nine Years War)*
 1595 - *Spanish forces burnt the town of Penzance in England*
 1597 – 2nd *Armada was sent against England by King Philip II of Spain*
 1601 - *Robert Devereux The Earl of Essex rebelled against Queen Elizabeth, and was killed on 25th February, 1601*
 24 March 1603 - *DEATH OF QUEEN ELIZABETH*
 24 March 1603 - *James I ascended the throne of England and Scotland*
 1603 - *Puritans The Millenary Petition presented before James I, for the reforms to the Church*
 1628 - *Death of James I, at the age of 58*

5.2.1 Political environment during Elizabethan Era

If one would critically evaluate the Elizabethan Era, he or she will find that the political structure was divided into different categories. The most important thing is that the Elizabethan era was following *Monarchical structure*. People at the higher ranks used to hold all the powers and Queen Elizabethan was the monarch, capital of all the powers and having rights to take all the important decisions. For the ease of governing, she had deputed some wise officials to help her in managing all her state. Still, she was the final authority and no law or rule would be passed without her consent. Elizabethan had two important official bodies namely *The Privy Council* and *the Parliament*.

The Privy Council has been an important part of Elizabethan reign and her politics. This council used to guide and assist her in taking some important political decisions. At the time of Queen Mary the council was large but Queen Elizabeth limited this with a belief that many people would cause problems with their many ideas. There were total 19 members in the council but later this number was reduced to 13 members only. The another important official body of Elizabethan reign was *Parliament*. The body was called Tudor parliament having two houses including ‘The house of Lords’ (Upper house) and ‘The house of Common’ (Lower house). Upper house was comprised of Aristocrats and Bishops whereas Lower house included common people. Common house members were elected by Elections and person with the support of local people would be the member of this house. However, only men were having the right of vote. The core objective of the parliament was to grant money to the Queen in her needs. But at the time of emergency or acute need, Queen Elizabeth had the right to take decision without their permission and this was known as Royal Proclamation.

Now if we talk about Economical condition of Elizabethan age, than we get to know that the initial years of her reign were every prosperous, but later due to increased population the state faced issues with Economic stability and poverty. The main source of the state's income was agriculture. Women were only involved in household chores and people from small towns were occupied with craftsman, butchery, bakery, tailoring, blacksmith and carpentry work. Queen Elizabeth also promoted some other trades with favourable financial contracts wherein Woolen the main one. Poverty was the most important concern for Queen Elizabeth and to overcome her government took some decisions to improve standards of living for poor.

5.2.2 Cultural Background

This age has been considered as the golden era of England. Moreover, this age was of social contentment and religious tolerance too. In addition to this, the age has been also marked other features like learning, violence, brutality, superstition and intellectual liberty. During this age science all progressed in the field of human anatomy, surgical operations and medicines. Invention of thermo-scope, hydrostatic balance by Galileo greatly benefited all but despite all these big inventions people had strong believes in superstitions and supernatural including magic, mystery, witches, ghosts, spirits, devils, etc. According to Krishna Gupta, "During the Elizabethan period much importance or significance used to be attached to certain equipments of magic such as books, robes, wands etc., without which the magicians could not perform any of the magic tricks." Such things are evident in even Shakespeare's famous drama *The Tempest*.

Further, in the court, Queen Elizabeth used to arrange festivals wherein many poets, actors, musicians and other artists used to get opportunities. Some of the famous events during this period were Shrove Tuesday, Hocktide, May Day, Whitsuntide, Midsummer Eve, Harvest – home, Halloween, and Christmas. In the words of C.L. Barber, "Here one cannot say how far analogies between social rituals and dramatic forms show an influence and how far they reflect the fact that the holiday occasion and the comedy are parallel manifestations of the same pattern of culture, of a way that men can cope with their life."

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1

1. Discuss the historical background of Elizabethan age in brief.
2. Write a brief note on some of the historical events of Elizabethan age.
3. Discuss the Political environment during Elizabethan Era.
4. Write a brief note on the cultural background of Elizabethan Era.

5.3 ELIZABETHAN POETRY

At no time in English literary history was there so great a profusion of lyrics as in the time of Elizabeth. The air was full of music. Beginning with *The book of Songs and Sonnets* (popularly known for its publisher Tottel's *Miscellany*,) in 1557 to Davidson's *Poetic Rapsody* in 1602, the market was flooded with verse anthologies. They bore such quaint and picturesque titles as *A Handful of Pleasant Delights*, *A Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions*, *The Paradise of Dainty Devices*, *The Arbor of Amorous Devices*, etc. These anthologies contained lyrics for every taste. On the one hand there are the courtly verses written by gentlemen rank who preferred anonymity to the hazards of public opinion, and on the other hand the Ballard rimes favoured by the masses.

"The historical importance of *Tottel's Miscellany* cannot be over-rated. It is the first surviving printed communication of polite poetry to the great variety of readers. The printing press had definitely displaced the minstrel". (*Tottel's Miscellany*, p. 117 - 119)

On these verse anthologies the most popular was *The Paradise of Dainty Devices* (1576) which reached a minimum of ten editions. The principal contributor of this anthology is Richard Edwards. But at least thirty other poets share with him the glories of this paradise. These songs are not the gay, light, carefree ditties suggested by the title. Most of the lyrics are charged with a high moral seriousness – even the love poems – and not a few are mournful in tone and distrustful of life.

In 1599 William Jaggard advertised a collection of poems entitled *The Passionate Pilgrim by William Shakespeare*. He introduced into this anthology two authentic sonnets from the Dark Lady sequence, and songs from Shakespeare's plays, more especially from *Love's Labour's Lost*. To these, he added lyrics by Marlowe and other poets contemporaneous with Shakespeare.

In 1600 appeared *England's Parnassus or the Choicest Flowers of Our Modern Poets*. The voluminous work contained over two thousand poems which were placed under title – headings such as 'angels', 'temperance', 'sorrow', etc. As may be surmised poems to true excellence lie side by side with mediocrity in the anthology.

The anthologies were restricted to lyrics. The song books contained both the lyrics and the music notation for their vocalization. Household singing was not uncommon in Elizabethan times, and the authors of the songs books encouraged this national pastime. Generally, speaking the songs of this period fall into two classes;

1. There were songs from three to six voices without any musical accompaniment. These songs were called madrigals, and were

particularly favoured by William Byrd. He published many songs composed both for the Roman and English Church services in the *Atlas of English Music*. Of the collection of madrigals, the most popular was Nicholas Yonge's *Musica Transalpina* (1588), and Morley's *Triumphs of Oriana to five and Six Voices* (1601). The latter is a tribute to Queen Elizabeth. It contains 25 lyrics set to music by an equal number of separate composers.

2. Other songs were sung to the accompaniment of a musical instrument. These songs were generally solos, but they are also to be found in voices. The instrument most commonly used in musical accompaniment was the lute. John Dowland's songbooks appeared from 1597 to 1612 and contain an admirable selection of lyrics, a large number of which are composed by anonymous poets, and musicians. However, the most important lutenist collection was published by Thomas Campion (1567 - 1620). He was a man of exceptional talents and varied abilities, expert in law and medicine, a writer and controversialist, a poet and a musician. His musical lyrics are among the finest of Elizabethan productions.

Tottel's Miscellany appeared in 1557 and contained the sonnets of Wyatt and Surrey. These two poets, whose lyrics appeared posthumously in *Tottel's Miscellany* are the precursors of the poetic renaissance in England. Wyatt (1503-42) resided for a time in France and Italy. He influenced the Italian lyric, and fashioned the English on the contemporary Italian model. His vision of the classics was also coloured by his stay in Italy. It was not the English, but the Italian view of the classics that formed the basis of his poetic imitations. His sonnets are modeled on Petrarch. The Italian form is in keeping with the genius of the Italian language with its multiplicity of rhymes, but does not accommodate easily to the English language. Wyatt's sonnets are the glorification of womanhood, though, occasionally the poet hints that women are not what they seem.

Whereas, Surrey (1517-47) was expressly mentioned by name in the description of the *Book of Songs and Sonnets* (*Tottel's Miscellany*). Surrey appears to have been a Byronic figure, the idol of his time moulding the tastes of his reader both by precept and example. A man of such prominence could not escape the political intrigues of the times. He was executed in the prime of his life at the age of thirty.

Surrey's most original contribution to English literature is the five-foot unrhymed iambic line. The Blank verse appears for the first time in English literature in 1554. The fourth book of *the Aeneid* is described on the title page as translated into English, and drawn into a strange meter by him. This meter was probably derived from Italy. In 1534, Vergil's fourth

book was translated into Italian in a meter corresponding to English blank verse.

A great number of his poems appeared in this form with alternating lines of twelve and fourteen syllables. George Gascoigne nicknamed the meter 'Poulter's Measure'.

5.4 ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

It won't be any exaggeration to say that the drama form became the most important part of Elizabethan age passion. Many theatres were erected during this era and they were the most popular medium of entertainment for the people irrespective of their social classes. Though the supreme authority was Queen Elizabeth, other women were not allowed to perform on stage and just be the part of audience only. Comedies had an edge over tragedies. For instance, *Ralph Roister Doister* by Nicholas Udall is the first regular comic drama in English. And *Gorboduc* by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton is regarded as the first regular tragic drama in English language. A part from these writers, university wits also contributed immensely in this genre. As the age was, rich in its experimentation, offers unique content to all the literary genres, namely drama, poetry and prose. The dramatist used to follow Greek tragedies, miracle plays, morality plays, interludes and attic dramas as their models. Revenge theme was one of the most popular themes for the famous playwrights of this era. In this list we can include Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. In addition to this we can also include other playwrights like Georg Champion, Thomas Heywood, Ben Johnson, Christopher Marlowe and John Lyly. Most of these dramatists used supernatural elements, as people of this age were quite superstitious in nature.

In order to engage the audience, writers used some literary devices including Aside or Soliloquy. All these factors provided drama, the highest rank among the other existing literary genres.

5.5 ELIZABETHAN PROSE

Elizabethan age has been considered as the golden era for English Poetry and Drama, however the importance of great prose writers cannot be ignored. Prose became quite popular because of the arrival of the printing press. Prose primarily dealt with the themes like amusement and Instructions. Mainly, the Elizabethan age prose can be divided into two parts, Fiction and Non-fiction. The fictions were mainly romantic in nature. Some of these writers are, Lyly, Greene, Sidney, Nashe and Delony. In the beginning, Elizabethan prose was mainly translation of Italian Novella like *Palace of Pleasure* by William Painter, *Tragically Discourses* by Geoffrey Fenton. Other Elizabethan prose writers include

Dekker, Lodge, North, etc. *Plutarch's Lives*, the translated work by Thomas North became the important work for all the prose writers of this age. Lyly's *Euphues*, *The Anatomy Wit* became notable works for its attractive alliteration, allusion and balanced phrases. In addition to this, Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, based on Spanish pastoral romance, became a mile-stone work. In this list we can mention other prose writers and their works like, Thomas Lodge's *Rosalind*, Thomas Dekker's *The Seven Deadly Sins of London* and Thomas Nash's *The Unfortunate Traveler* or *The life of Jack Wilton*, and Richard Hooker's *Of the Ecclesiastical Policy*.

Moreover, there were also writers who tried their hands on translating Bible like William Tyndale's *New testament* from Greek and the *Old Testament* from Hebrew language. We can say that the very humanistic, romantic and liberal characteristic of this age promoted the growth of Elizabethan age prose.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2

1. Write a brief note on the Elizabethan Poetry.

2. Write a brief note on the Elizabethan drama.

3. Write a brief note on Elizabethan prose.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 3

STATE WHETHER THE STATEMENTS ARE TRUE OR FALSE.

1. Queen Elizabeth's reign can be marked from 1558 to 1603.
2. Some of the major literary genres of Elizabethan age include Poetry, Drama, Prose, Novel, and short stories.

3. In Queen Elizabeth's reign, people were filled with radical spirit and all were full of depression.
4. Charles Howard and Sir Francis Drake commanded the force and won Spanish Armada.
5. Faerie Queen was written by Spenser in the year 1594.
6. Queen Elizabeth died in the year 1603.
7. The role of the Privy Council was to help Queen Elizabeth in Economic conditions.
8. There were total 19 members in the Privy council, but later the number was increased to 24.
9. Tottel's Miscellany first appeared in the year 1557.
10. Gorboduc is regarded as the first regular comedy by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton.

5.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we discussed the historical background of the Elizabethan age and some of the important literary characteristics. We also briefly learnt about the development of Elizabethan age's poetry, drama and prose genres in general and some prominent works in particular.

5.7 KEY WORDS

Nationalist : a person who wants his/her country or region to become independent
Hitherto : Until now
Monarch : a person who reigns over a kingdom or empire
Proclamation: an official announcement
Manifestation: a sign that something is happening
Profusion : a very large quantity of something

5.8 BOOKS SUGGESTED

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2. Evans, I. (1966). *A short history of English literature*. Penguin books.
3. Legouis, E., & Cazamian, L. F. (1927). *A history of English literature* (Vol. 2). JM Dent & Sons Limited.
4. Nayar, P. K. (2009). *A short history of English literature*. Foundation Books.
5. Sampson, G., & Churchill, R. C. (1970). *The concise Cambridge history of English literature*. Cambridge University Press.

Answers

1. T

2. F

3. F

4. T

5. F

6. T

7. F

8. T

UNIT : 6**ELIZABETHAN AGE MAJOR WRITERS AND
LITERARY WORKS****STRUCTURE****6.0 Objectives****6.1 Major Elizabethan Age Writers and Their Literary Works****6.1.1 George Gascoigne****6.1.2 Thomas Sackville****6.1.3 Sir Philip Sidney****6.1.4 Edmund Spenser****6.1.5 William Shakespeare****6.1.6 University Wits****6.1.7 Samuel Daniel****6.2 Let Us Sum up****6.3 Key Words****6.4 Suggested Reading****6.5 Reference/Websites****Answers**

6.0 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this unit are to:

- Study the biographical sketches of the famous literary figures of Elizabethan age.
- Study the famous literary works of the writers of Elizabethan age that have marked the literary scene.
- Examine how the Elizabethan writers have contributed to English literature through their literary works.
- Look into the major literary works written during the Elizabethan age.

**6.1 MAJOR ELIZABETHAN AGE WRITERS AND
LITERARY WORKS**

The Elizabethan age in the history of English literature is associated with the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603). It is considered to be the golden age when poetry and drama flourished. It is in this era during

which the theatrical art blossomed. Great writer like William Shakespeare, Sir Philip Sidney, Christopher Marlowe, Edmund Spenser, Thomas Sackville, Robert Green, Thomas Nashe, George Peele, George Gascoigne, John Lyly, Thomas Lodge, Thomas Kyd, Roger Ascham, Richard Hooker, Ben Johnson, Thomas Dekker, John Fletcher, Frances Beaumont, Michael Drayton, George Marston belonged to Elizabethan age. These writers, playwrights and poets contributed immensely to the field of English literature through their works.

6.1.1 George Gascoigne

George Gascoigne (1539- 1577) was born in Cardington, England. He is considered to be a renowned poet. Gascoigne went to Cambridge to study and from thereon he went to Middle Temple to pursue legal studies. In 1555, he joined Gray's Inn, one of the Inn of the court among four Inn which has a professional association for judges and barristers. He was a versatile personality as he had pursued several careers like that of a politician, courtier, soldier, and most importantly a man of letters. His famous works include *Hundredth Sundry Flowers* and *The Poises of George Gascoigne*. But later this works led him into a controversy as it exposed the scandals of the court. After this defame he decided to become a soldier and fight at Brielle in Netherlands. Unfortunately, he was taken as a prisoner of war. In the year 1574, that is two years after fighting the war he was freed and asked to return to England. He got his major works published after he returned from war. He died at the age of 42 in 1577 at Barnack in Peterborough.

His Major works include *The Fruites of War* and *The Adventures of Master F.J.* He translated *La Venerie* and *Hemetes*. He wrote several poems like "A Lover's Lullaby", "And If I Did What Then", "The Night is Near Gone", "You must not wonder, though you think it".

"And If I Did What Then" is a famous poem by Gascoigne. In the poem he expresses his anguish on being cheated by his beloved. He uses the metaphor of a fish to compare the fish to a woman. He uses the imagery of sea and expresses that the sea has variety of fishes for every fisherman, but he is saddened at the fact that why did the destiny give him a fish that was not good for him? In other words, he is talking about the beloved who had cheated him and left him. He laments the fact that why did the destiny give him a beloved who would cheat him? But towards the end gives a tone of assurance that as time passes life will go on sailing smoothly as earlier.

6.1.2 Thomas Sackville

Thomas Sackville was born in 1536, in Sussex, England. He was the son of a wealthy lawyer and administrator, Sir Richard Sackville. Sir Richard Sackville who was under- treasurer at Exchequer (the one who looks after the revenue and other official accounts related to government) was the first cousin of Anne Boleyn. After the death of Sir Richard Sackville, Thomas Sackville became the Baron of Buckhurst. Thomas Sackville served the parliament and also held the post of Lord High Treasurer. He died on 19th April 1608, at the council table.

He is known for his poems and drama and more importantly for his contribution to the development of drama and poetry in the Elizabethan era. His famous works include *Tragedy of Gorboduc* (1562), and two poems titled “*Induction*” (1563) and “*Buckingham’s Complaint*” (1563). Thomas Sackville had not written much during his literary career as he was interested in being the Statesman and in being devoted in his services towards the government. Thomas Sackville is today remembered for his play *Tragedy of Gorboduc* that he wrote along with Thomas Norton. The play became the first neoclassical English tragedy and the first play that was written in blank verse.

Norton and Sackville took the details for the play from *Historia Regum Britanniae* (*History Of The Kings Of Britain*) that was authored by Geoffrey of Monmouth. It tells the story of a King called Gordobuc and his two sons Ferrex and Porrex. Gorboduc was a successful king but he did not wait for his death and hands away his kingdom to his sons. This leads into a quarrel between the two brothers. Ferrex who is the elder brother is suspicious of his brother’s ambition and starts getting his military power strong so that he can defend himself when Porrex attacks. When Porrex comes to know about the military preparation, he sends his troop and get him killed. Videna, queen of Gordobuc hit back after the death of her most adored son and killed Porrex. The people of the kingdom shocked by the events taking place in the kingdom, they killed both the king and queen.

Gorboduc was for the first time performed at the Inner Temple in the presence of Queen Elizabeth I and Lord Robert Dudley, Lord Governor. This performance marked an important breakthrough in the history and the development of English drama.

6.1.3 Sir Philip Sidney

Born on 30th November, 1554 at Penshurst, England, Sir Philip Sidney is considered to be a great author and a statesman during the Elizabethan age. Sir Philip Sidney’s mother was Mary Dudley who was the daughter of the duke of Northumberland. His father was Sir Henry Sidney. He

studied at Christ Church at Oxford and gained knowledge of French, Italian and Latin. He developed interest in knowing about European politics and came into contact with many leading statesmen. At the very early age, he became a cupbearer (a man of high rank whose duty is to serve to wine and other drinks) to the Queen Elizabeth and asked to go on political mission, he became an ambassador to the Emperor Rudolf II of Germany and Louis VI. In 1581 and again in 1584, Sir Philip Sidney became a Member of Parliament in Kent. In 1583, he married Frances who was the daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham, the secretary of the state of Queen Elizabeth. He was blessed with a daughter and he named her Elizabeth. Not gaining the position he wanted, he devoted himself to literature. He wrote a play titled *The Lady of May* for Queen Elizabeth. In 1585, after a long wait he was appointed as a joint master of the weaponry. Later he was also appointed as a Governor of the Dutch town of Flushing. He passed away in 1586 and was buried at St Paul's Cathedral in London.

Sir Philip Sidney contributed widely to English literature through his famous works titled *Arcadia* also called *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, *Astrophel and Stella*, and *Defence of Poesie*- a seminal work in the history of English criticism. He wrote many famous poems like "A Ditty", "The Nightingale", "Ring Out Your Bells" and many more. Because of his literary reputation, Spenser had dedicated his famous work *The Shepherd's Calendar* to him.

The Defence of Poesie: *The Defence of Poesie* is a seminal work in the history of literary criticism that defends poetry in particular. He wrote *The Defence of Poesie* to refute Plato's stance. Plato in his famous work *Republic* declares that poets should be banned from the state. Considering this, Sir Philip Sidney puts forth his arguments saying that the poets through their poems had brought knowledge and learning to the human race. Literature in general and poetry in particular had the power to educate humanity in a better way as compared to history and philosophy. Sir Philip Sidney wrote *The Defence of Poesie* in the year 1582, but this work was published posthumously in the year 1595.

"The Nightingale": The poem "The Nightingale" is a famous poem written by Sir Philip Sidney. In the poem the poet addresses the mythical character named Philomela who was the daughter of King Pandion of Attica. Philomela was molested by Tereus who was her brother-in-law and a result of this shameful act she was in a great pain.

"Sings out her woes, a thorn her song-book making,
And mournfully bewailing,
Her throat in tunes expresseth
What grief her breast oppresseth

For Tereus' force on her chaste will prevailing.

-“The Nightingale” by Sir Philip Sidney

Philomela later is transformed into a nightingale and sings of her sorrows. Seeing this, the poet states that Philomela can at least sing of her pain and suffering and thereby give a vent to her emotions but as a man he cannot sing of his sorrows. His pain is more compared to that of the nightingale as is not able to express the it. The poem comprises of 24 lines and the base of the story is from the book titled *Metamorphoses* by Ovid.

6.1.4 Edmund Spenser

Edmund Spenser was born in 1552/ 53 in London, England. He is considered to one of the greatest poets in the history of English literature. Not much is known about the childhood and the family of Spenser. He went to Merchant Taylor School for his education where he got exposure to learn Greek and Latin. Later, his interest in religion and literature made him join Pembroke Hall, Cambridge University where he earned the degree of Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts. He became the secretary for the Bishop of Rochester. He even worked for Earl of Leicester. He was appointed as a secretary to the Lord Deputy of Ireland in the year 1580. He passed away in the year 1599. Because of his famous reputation as poet and his literary contribution he was buried in Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey.

He contributed widely to the field of literature written during the renaissance through his famous works like “The Shepherdes Calender” (1579), “The Faerie Queene”, *Amoretti and Epithalamion*, *Britomart*. “The Faerie Queene” is considered to one of the longest epic poems written in English. It is in the poem “The Faerie Queen”, Spenser invented the Spenserian stanza. “The Faerie Queene” is considered to be an allegorical poem where the characters in the poem represent virtues. The poem is divided into six parts where part one presents the story of knight named Redcross who represents the virtue of holiness. The second part tells the story of Sir Guyon, who represents temperance. The third part highlights the virtue of chastity as represented in the character of Britomart. The fourth part is titled “The Legend of Cambell and Telamond” or “Of Friendship”, the fifth part tells the story of Sir Artegall symbolizing fairness and the sixth part tells the story of Sir Calidore representing the virtue of civility.

“**The Shepherdes Calender**” was Spenser's first important poetic masterpiece and he dedicated this work to Sir Philip Sidney. It is divided into twelve eclogues and each eclogue represents a month of the year. It highlights the pastoral life as presented by a common figure a shepherd. Spenser has also written lines praising Queen Elizabeth in this poem.

6.1.5 William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare is considered to be the greatest dramatist, poet and an actor of the Elizabethan age. He is considered to a national poet and he is also known as “Bard of Avon”.

William Shakespeare was born on April 23, 1564 at Stratford-upon-Avon, a town in England. And he was baptized on April 26, 1564. His father, John Shakespeare was burgess of the borough and later a bailiff. His mother was Mary Arden. It is said that because John Shakespeare was involved in various trade, he had suffered financial fluctuation. William Shakespeare got educated at Kind Edward VI Grammar School in Stratford. He married Anne Hathaway when he was eighteen years old. Anne Hathaway was around eight years elder to him. Form his marriage; he was blessed with two daughters Susanna and Judith. He was also blessed another child named Hamlet who later died at the age of 11. At the age of 52, he died on April 23, 1616 in Stratford-upon-Avon, England. He was buried at the Holy Trinity Church in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Shakespeare wrote around 154 sonnets that were published in the year 1609. These sonnets were written in form of Shakespearean sonnet where the fourteen-line poem was divided into three quatrains followed by a couplet. It is observed that the sonnets from 1to 126 are addressed to a young man who is very charming and from 127 onwards, the sonnets are addressed to a Dark Lady whom he loved. His sonnets have universal appeal where he talks about love, jealousy, beauty infidelity, the ruthlessness of time etc.

Shakespeare’s sonnet no 116 ‘Let me not to the marriage of true minds’ among all the sonnets is very famous. The sonnet deals with the theme permanency of love. In this sonnet he has defined love. He says that a true love never changes with the passage of time. Rather it becomes stronger as the time passes. He adds that a true love will never change even though it finds changes in the lover. He says that a true love will always endure all the storms and tempest that would try to harm it. Love is something that would overcome all the obstacles without losing the commitment and love towards one another. He goes on to the extent of saying that if what he says about the love is wrong or he is proved wrong, he would never write and no man must have ever loved.

Sonnet no 18, “Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer Day” is yet another sonnet that is very famous. This sonnet is addressed to a young man, whom he compares to with a summer day. But later he realizes that the young man who was his beloved is more lovely and temperate and thus

cannot be compared to the summer. He says that the summer will pass away, its existence is temporary but the beauty of the young man will never fade as he has captured the beauty of the young man in his poem and it will live till men can see and breathe. Thus, it can be surmised that the poem is about the praise of the splendor of the young man who has been addressed time and again in the sonnets by Shakespeare.

William Shakespeare is also universally acclaimed as the greatest dramatist of the Elizabethan age. This is because his dramas are timeless having universal appeal. He possessed a great understanding of human nature and he imbibed all the qualities of human nature in his play. He wrote about love, jealousy, revenge, suffering, failures etc. He wrote tragedies, comedy and historical plays. He wrote comedy plays titled *As you like it*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Love Labour's Lost*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Tempest*, *Twelfth Night* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. The tragedies written by he includes *Romeo and Juliet*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Macbeth*, *Coriolanus*, *Cymbeline*, *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar*, *King Lear*, *Othello*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Timon of Athens*, *Titus Andronicus*. He wrote plays based on history namely *Henry IV Part I*, *Henry IV Part II*, *Henry VI Part III*, *Henry VIII*, *Henry V*, *Henry VI Part I*, *Henry VI Part II*, *Richard II*, *Richard III* and *King John*. **He wrote problem plays like** *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure* and *Troilus and Cressida*.

Julius Caesar is considered to be one of the greatest tragedies in the history of English literature written by William Shakespeare. It is also considered to be a historical play that was based on true events taken from the history of Rome. It tells the story of Caesar's assassination by his conspirators and the defeat of his conspirators towards the end of the play. Caesar's friend Brutus becomes jealous of Caesar's fame and victory and joins hands with Caesar's conspirators. Caesar is assassinated by Brutus and other rivals on the Ides of March. Mark Antony gives a speech at the funeral of Caesar and explains people of the kingdom the plot hatched by conspirators to kill Caesar. The speech by Mark Antony leads to commotion in the kingdom and conspirators are asked to leave the city. Cassius and Brutus start gathering the army to fight against Mark Antony who has collaborated with Caesar's nephew Octavius and Lepidus. A war breaks out and seeing the possibility of losing the war Cassius takes help of his servant to get himself killed. Brutus looks at the dead body of Cassius and realizes that the only way for dying honorably would be to kill his own self. Thus Brutus dies and Antony becomes the ruler of the Rome. Thus, William Shakespeare through this play tries to

present the nature of politics and how failure to understand and interpret people's motives and actions brings one's own downfall.

Thus, William Shakespeare through his plays and sonnets contributed notably to the Elizabethan era.

6.1.6 University Wits

University Wits is a name given to a group of scholars who were graduates from Cambridge and Oxford and who came together because of their passion for writing. They contributed greatly to the field of English literature through their scholarly works. University Wits were great playwrights and poets of 16th century. This group of scholars known as University Wits includes Christopher Marlowe, Robert Green, Thomas Nashe (graduates from Cambridge), Thomas Lodge, George Peele, John Lyly (graduates from Oxford) and Thomas Kyd who was not from any of these universities. However, it was Christopher Marlowe who contributed greatly as a dramatist. It was Christopher Marlowe who gave life to the theatre and transformed the stage into an industry.

Christopher Marlowe: Christopher Marlowe, predecessor of William Shakespeare was a famous poet and playwright of the Elizabethan age. He is called "The Father of English Tragedy". It was Christopher Marlowe who introduced dramatic blank verse into the field of literary writing.

Christopher Marlowe was born in the 1564 in Canterbury, England. His father, John Marlowe was a shoemaker at Canterbury. He studied at Corpus Christi College in Cambridge. He wrote extensively for the theatres in London. He was killed in fight over the bill by Ingram Frizer on May 30, 1593 at a lodging house in Deptford.

His famous works include *Tamburlaine the Great*, *Doctor Faustus* or *The Tragically History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus*, *Dido*, *Queen of Carthage*, *Edward II*, *Hero and Leander*.

***The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus*:** This play by Christopher Marlowe was published in 1604. The play that is divided in five acts tells the story of Doctor Faustus who is doctor, a scholar of medicine. But he desires to learn magic in order to become powerful. Valdes and Cornelius teach him magic. Through his magic, he brings to him a devil called Mephistopheles. Faustus asks Mephistopheles to go back to his master and ask for him twenty-four years of power and in return he would sell his soul to Lucifer. The angles from heaven do warn him not to make the bond but Faustus does not agree and makes a contract using his blood to sign it. But later Faustus begins to repent his decision. And to divert his attention, Lucifer and Mephistopheles makes

Faustus engaged in several magical trick where he could feel his power. For example, he invokes the spirit of Helen of Troy.

Later, Faustus starts repenting on his deeds and hopes to get salvation but he knows that he cannot go back and he won't be forgiven for being so ambitious. And towards the end of the play the devil appears and takes his soul. Thus, Dr Faustus ambition for power and glory brings his own destruction.

Robert Greene: John Greene was born in 1558 in Norwich. He studied at Cambridge. Greene began his literary career with the publication of *Mamillia*, a long romance. He came to be known as a lyrical poet because of his unique style in writing of poems. His famous plays include *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, *A Looking Glass for London and England*, *The History of Orlando Furioso*, *The Scottish History of James the Fourth*, *A Pleasant Conceited Comedy of George a Green*. His another famous work which is considered to be an attack on William Shakespeare is titled *Greene's Groats-Worth of Witte, bought with a million of Repentance*. It is said that he did this because of his jealousy for Shakespeare who was becoming famous at that time. Robert Greene died in the year 1592, in London

Thomas Nashe: Thomas Nashe, son of William Nashe and Margaret Nashe, was born in 1567 at Lowestoft in England. He studied at Cambridge University and later got associated with literary scholars famously known as University Wits. He was a well-known playwright, poet and satirist. In 1592, he wrote his first work, a prose satire titled *Pierce Penilesse His Supplication to the Divell*. Later he authored *The Unfortunate Traveler* in 1594 which is considered to be the first picaresque novel written in English. His other famous work includes *The Anatomie of Absurditie*, *Preface to Greenes Menaphon*, *An Almond of a Parrot*, *Preface to Sir Philip Sidney's Astrophel and Stella*, play titled *Summer's last Will and Testament*, *Have with You to Saffron-Walden*. He died in the year 1601, at a very young age of 34.

Thomas Lodge: Thomas Lodge was born in the year 1558, in West Ham, London. His father, Thomas Lodge was a Lord Mayor of London. He received his education from Merchant Taylor School and at Trinity College, Oxford. He even studied at Lincoln's Inn in London. His famous works include *Rosalynde: Euphues Golden Legacie*, *Margarite of America*, *An Alarum Against Usurers*, *Scillaes Metamorphosis*, *Phillis* and *Momus*. His work *An Alarum Against Usurers* presented how moneylenders trapped heirs of aristocratic family in debt by indulging them into luxurious life.

In 1588, Lodge fled to South America. He lived there for a long time and got himself enrolled in a course in medicine. In 1598, he became a graduate from University of Avignon. Later he did his M.D from Oxford and became a medical practitioner in London. He fought hard against the plague and died in 1625.

George Peele

George Peele was born in the year 1556 in London. He was known as a dramatist and a poet. He studied at Christ's Hospital and later at Broadgates Hall at Oxford. He wrote the famous play titled *The Arraignment of Paris*, a pastoral drama. His another famous works includes *Famous Chronicle of King Edward the First* and *The Old Wives' Tale*. He wrote other plays like *David and Bethsade*, *Battle of Alcazar*. He fell ill due to pox and died at the age of 40 in the year 1596.

John Lyly

John Lyly was born in the year 1552 in Kent, England. He studied at Magdalen College, Oxford. He became famous with his prose romances titled *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit* (1578) and *Euphues and His England* (1580). His another famous works (plays) includes *Endimion*, *Gallathea*, *Love's Metamorphosis*. In the later years of his life, John Lyly's fame started to diminish due to the rise of William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe. He had tough time living with financial problems. He died in the year 1606 with a heavy debt on him.

6.1.7 Samuel Daniel

Samuel Daniel was born in 1562 at Taunton, England. Samuel Daniel matriculated from Magdalen Hall at Oxford but later he left his studies without earning a degree. He became an English ambassador at Paris. He travelled extensively where he met the poet Battista Gaurini in Padua, Italy. During his travel, he got exposed to Italian and French literature that helped him to develop understanding of literary work which in turn influenced his drama. He became a tutor of William Herbert and therefore lived at Wilton. At Yorkshire, he became the tutor of Lady Anne Clifford. In the year 1604, on the demand of Queen Anne, he wrote play *The Vision of Twelve Goddesses*. At the completion of the play, Queen Anne awarded him with the right to license plays at Blackfriars Theater.

Samuel Daniel is appreciated as a historian and a lyric poet. He wrote some famous plays that include *The Tragedie of Cleopatra*, *The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses* (1604), *The Tragedy of Philotas* (1605), *The Queen's Arcadia* (1606), *Tethys Festival* (1610), *Hymen's Triumph* (1615). His other major works are *Musophilus*, or *Defence of all Learning* (1602-3), *A Defence of Ryme* (1603), *The Civil*

Wars (1595-1623), *The Collection of the History of England* (1621), *Sonnets to Delia* (1592)

In the final years of his life, Samuel Daniel concentrated all his efforts in writing his final dramatic work *Hymen's Truimph* that focused on the history of England. He died on 14th October, 1619 at Beckington.

There are several other prominent writers like Roger Ascham, Richard Hooker, Ben Johnson, Thomas Dekker, John Fletcher, Frances Beaumont, Michael Drayton and George Marston who have contributed to the Elizabethan age through their literary works.

Roger Ascham (1515-1568) is known for his work *Toxophilus*, a book on archery which he dedicated to Henry VIII and another important work is titled *The School Master*. John Fletcher (1579- 1625) became the most influential dramatist of his time. His famous plays include *The Island Princesse*, *A Wife for a Moneth*, *The Mad Lover*, *The Humorous Lieutenant*.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1

ANSWER THE QUESTIONS IN DETAIL.

1. What is the contribution of William Shakespearean as poet?

2. Critically comment of the play *Julius Caesar* by William Shakespeare.

3. How did University Wits contribute to the Elizabethan age?

4. Critically comment on "Doctor Faustus as a tragic hero".

5. Critically appreciate the poem “ If I Did What Then”.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2

ANSWER THE QUESTIONS IN BRIEF.

1. How did Sir Philip Sidney defend poetry in his seminal work *The Defence of Poesy*?

2. What is the meaning of the word “Sonnet”?

3. Which are the famous tragedies written by William Shakespeare?

4. What is the role of Mephistopheles in the Dr Faustus’s damnation?

-
-
5. What leads to the death of King Gorboduc in the play *The Tragedy of Gorboduc*?
-
-
-
-

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 3

WRITE SHORT NOTES.

1. William Shakespearean as a dramatist
2. *The tragedy of Gorboduc* by Thomas Sackville
3. Christopher Marlowe
4. Sir Philip Sidney
5. Edmund Spenser

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 4

CHOOSE APPROPRIATE OPTION FROM GIVEN BELOW.

- 1) Whom has Robert Green criticized in his famous work *Groats-Worth of Witte, bought with a million of Repentance*?
- a) Sir Thomas Wyatt b) William Shakespeare
c) Sir Philip Sidney d) Thomas Sackville
- 2) William Shakespeare has written _____ sonnets
- a) 145 b) 154
a) 144 d) 140
- 3) What is the name of the devil that appeared before Dr Faustus ?
- a) Mephistopheles b) Qwan
c) Valdes d) Cornelius
- 4) "The Shepherdes Calender" by Spenser is divided into _____ eclogues
- a) 13 b) 12
c) 14 d) 11
- 5) Who among the following is not considered to be 'University Wits'?
- a) Christopher Marlowe b) Robert Greene
c) Thomas Nashe d) Thomas Norton

- 6) *Mamillia* is a famous work by _____.
 a) Thomas Nashe b) George Peele
 b) John Lyly d) Thomas Norton
- 7) *Hamlet* is a play written by _____.
 a) William Shakespeare b) John Still
 c) Thomas Sackville d) George Gascoigne
- 8) “And If I Did What Then” is a poem by _____.
 a) George Gascoigne b) William Shakespeare
 c) Sir Thomas Wyatt d) None
- 9) What was the name of William Shakespeare’s wife?
 a) Anne Hathaway b) Margaret Hathaway
 c) Julia Hathaway d) Olivia Hathaway
- 10) *The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses* is written by _____.
 a) Sir Philip Sidney b) Samuel Daniel
 c) Lord Henry Howard d) William Shakespeare

6.2 LET US SUM UP

The contribution of Elizabethan writers has been substantial in the history of English literature. It was the contribution of these great writer that helped the poetry and drama to flourish in the ages to come. The work by these great Elizabethan writers had highly influenced the coming generations of the poets and dramatist. Thus, Elizabethan age rightly came to be known as the golden age in the history of English literature.

6.3 KEY WORDS

- Eclogues** It refers to a pastoral poem that highlights the rural life and life of shepherds. It presents how the people living in the rural setup live a peaceful country life which free from the corrupt world and people resulting into happiness and harmony.
- Sonnet** A poem that consist of fourteen lines and is written with a fixed rhyme scheme. It is written in iambic pentameter.
- Problem play** A form of drama that highlights issues related to society through the debates between the characters performing of the stage.

6.4 SUGGESTED READING

1. *Elizabethan Writers* by Charles Nicholl
2. *Framing Elizabethan Fictions: Contemporary Approaches to Early Modern Narrative Prose* by Constance Relihan,
3. *The Uses of the Canon: Elizabethan Literature and Contemporary Theory* by Howard Felperin
4. [Sons and Authors in Elizabethan England](#) by Derek B. Alwes
5. *Poets A-K Portal*. Britannica. www.britannica.com › Literature › Poetry › Poets A-K
6. *Poetry Foundation*. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/>

6.5 REFERENCE/ WEBSITES

1. www.britannica.com › Literature › Poetry › Poets A-K
2. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Gorboduc-mythical-king-of-Britain>
3. <https://poets.org/poet/edmund-spenser>
4. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Philip-Sidney>
5. www.poetryfoundation.org › Poets
6. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Faerie_Queene
7. <https://www.enotes.com/topics/shepheardes-calender>
8. <https://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/d/doctor-faustus/play-summary>
9. <https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/why-did-robert-greene-dislike-shakespeare-449483>

ANSWERS

- 1) B: William Shakespeare
- 2) B: 154
- 3) A: Mephistopheles
- 4) B: 12
- 5) D: Thomas Norton
- 6) D: Robert Greene
- 7) A: William Shakespeare
- 8) A: George Gascoigne
- 9) A: Anne Hathaway
- 10) B: Samuel Daniel

BLOCK 2

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Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University
(Established by Government of Gujarat)

B.A. (Hons.) English
Semester 2
ENMJ 201
History of English Literature I

Block

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UNIT- 7

PURITAN AGE-1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND CHARACTERISTICS

STRUCTURE :

7.0 Objectives

7.1 Introduction and Background of Puritan Age

7.2 Characteristics of Puritans age

7.3 Socio-Political and Literary Background

7.3.1 Jacobeans

7.3.2 Caroline Period

7.3.3 Commonwealth Period

7.4 Timeline of Puritan Age

7.5 Let Us Sum Up

7.6 Key words

7.7 Books Suggested

Answers

7.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, we shall discuss

- the background of the puritan age
- characteristics of Puritan Literature

On completing the unit, you should be able to,

- Comprehend the entire Puritan age; politically, socially and literary
- become well acquainted with the various types of literature prevailed in this specific era

7.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF PURITAN AGE

The Puritan age left the biggest impact on the history of English literature. It begins with the accession of King James VI of Scotland and James I of England in 1603. It was the second and greater renaissance; rebirth of moral nature of man and the intellectual awakening. Puritan age was marked by the decline of renaissance age and age of revival of knowledge. Puritan age is divided into three periods; Jacobeans-James I as ruler (1603-1625), Caroline-Charles I as ruler (1625-1649) and Commonwealth period (1649-1660) Oliver Cromwell as the Lord Protector. The king was against the parliament. He was not willing to entertain the Right of Petition, which heralded taxation unsanctioned by parliament as illegal and he ruled for eleven years without parliament.

Civil War was the central phenomena in the Puritan age. Oliver Cromwell was supported by church and allowed sects to worship as they pleased. The central aim of the Puritans was the purification of religious practice and to make man free and honest. The Puritans, in their efforts to purify the psyche of the people by force and they closed theatres for the same and saw displeasure upon dance, music, the art and other pleasures; therefore, anger prevailed among the common-man and it showed the seeds of hatred against them. Civil War, Biblical influences, lack of vitality and concreteness, lack of spirit of unity, Dominance of critical and intellectual spirit; are the chief characteristics the Puritan age. In literature of the Puritan Age we find the translations trending. Bible translation cleared the notion of religion. The Bible was available to all. A conversational tone emerges in the Jacobean literature and money, property and class were the main theme of the Puritan age. In addition, there was a new frankness about sexuality and sexual relations. Virtue, evil, faith and human corruption were the subject of many prose works. We observe the development of poetry in this era; earlier it was restricted to some specific subject and it was written on by the elite class of the society; while in the Puritan age, the Metaphysical poetry and Caroline poetry emerged made great impact on the history of the English poetry. The Metaphysical had the concern with ordinary class of the society. They were the reformer of the society through original religious thoughts. The Metaphysical poetry had theme of both great religious fervour and human love/sensually, often combining the two in the same poem. Their metaphors were called conceit. Faith, repentance, spiritual progress, perseverance and grace were the central theme of Caroline religious poetry.

7.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF PURITANS AGE

Civil war:

Puritan Age - the entire period was dominated by the civil war. It divided the people into two factions, first, who were loyal to the king and second, the people against the king. It affected social, political and religious institutions of England. The crisis began when James I began to give too much importance to the church, and ignored the Parliament, which had created him. The puritans therefore welcomed the movement of constitutional reform. Thus, from 1642, a hostile period began in England, which continued till 1649 when Charles I was executed. However, even after that for eleven long years, England experienced political instability. These eleven years saw the establishment of Commonwealth and the rise of Oliver Cromwell.

Biblical Influences:

Puritan literature relied on biblical allusions, or references to biblical events or characters, were used heavily in puritan writing. Many authors would compare themselves or current struggles; to hardships endured by characters illustrated in the Bible. The Bible was the main source of inspiration for the writers. We can see one of the most prominent works

of literature 'Paradise Lost' by John Milton as a perfect example of this biblical aspect of the puritan age.

To make Men honest and free:

It aimed to make men honest and free. This is the ultimate feature of Puritan literature. There should not be any Monarch to rule over. But at the same time should not forget that Men should be extremely honest. The morality, the ethical part of the human being cannot be done away with. Though the spirit of the Puritanism was definitely religious, yet, the puritans were not religious sect. Thus, the Puritanism simply was a movement put into place by the men who thought and who felt and behave that morality is all important.

Lack of Vitality and Concreteness:

The literature of this period lacks in concreteness and vitality. In the preceding Age - Elizabethan Age Shakespeare had always stood for concrete realities of life. His words and phrases were always full of vitality, thrill and warmth. But poets Milton were more concerned with theorizing about life. They were not concern about the pleasure of life, they were not concern about what it takes to live life and literature with great strength, vitality so and so forth. Milton's lines impress us with their stateliness and power, but do not move us as passion. Thus, there is Majesty in Milton's poetry, but seldom lines that thrill or showcase warmth of humanity.

Lack of spirit of unity:

Despite its diversity, Elizabethan marked by a spirit of unity. The spirit of unity resulted from intense patriotism and rationalism of all classes. It also was the result of devotion and loyalty to the Queen. The Queen was sincerely dedicated towards the welfare of her subjects. However, during this period, both James I and Charles II were least bothered about the people of England. They were only bothered about their own convictions, their luxuries as well as their own philosophy. In fact, both Monarchs were hostile to the interest of their subjects. They didn't care what was happening to the people. If there were diseases the Monarch will not help, if there were government failure the Monarch will not consider himself responsible. The entire country was decided by the struggle for political and religious liberty. Literature too was therefore equally divided in spirit patriotic feelings could hardly be raised by the literature of this age.

Dominance of critical and intellectual spirit:

Instead of the romantic spirit that pervaded the Elizabethan literature, in this age, the critical and intellectual spirit was pre-dominant. W.J. Long the well-known critic said that "In the literature of the puritan period one looks in vain for romantic ardor." Even in the lyrics and the love poems, a critical and intellectual spirit takes over. Whatever romance asserted itself was in the form and not in feelings. We find a fantastic and artificial adornment of speech rather than the natural utterance of the heart.

Literature and poetry in particular appealed to the morals, rather than to the sentiments.

Literary characteristics of the Puritan age

Prose

❖ Features of Jacobean prose

- Translations became very popular during the late Elizabethan and Jacobean periods.
- Some of the writers were interested in science and learning.
- There were great deal of interest in human psychology and behavior
- Virtue, Evil, faith and human corruption were the subject of many prose works, especially sermons and religious writing by priests such as John Donne and Lancelot Andrewes.
- Human character and society was the subject of many prose works. Character books classified human into various types.
- Travelers' tales, such as the Richard Hakluyt (edited) anthology, documented their experience of other culture and geographical regions.
- There was an interest in geography. Histories of the world and maps were increasingly printed and sold.
- There were pamphlets, lengthy prose works and essays on education, knowledge (both true and false), wisdom, culture and other social conditions from major writers such as Bacon and Milton.

•

Drama

❖ Features of Jacobean drama

- A new conversational tone emerges in Jacobean drama. The Elizabethan used rhetoric that highly stylized while the Jacobean used everyday speech.
- The main themes are money, property and class. In addition, there is a new frankness about sexuality and sexual relations.
- While there is quite a lot of moralizing, there is also a secret fascination with the wicked and the corrupt. It is vice that creates the drama in the play.
- Moral and sexual corruption is a constant theme in Jacobean drama, especially in the tragedies.
- Jacobean drama is characterized by its realism and taste for satire
- The most common themes include lust, adultery, corruption, death, sickness (both physical and mental), and exploitation of the weak, the cruelty of the aristocrats and upper classes, the eccentricities of human beginnings, the hypocrisy of people, dishonesty and family crises.
- The playwrights used to include comments and addresses to the audience explaining the motive of characters or the psychology that causes them to behave in certain ways.

Non – fiction

❖ Features of Caroline non-fiction

- Highly personal.
- A degree of skepticism about religious and philosophical truth, best seen in the work of Thomas Browne.
- Influenced by the intellectual movements and figures of the age: Pascal Montaigne, Descartes, etc.
- An interesting mix of science and philosophy as well as science and religion in almost all the writing of this period.
- The writing were usually on controversial issues such as faith and the 'right' religion
- The debates between reason and Faith gather fresh intensity and actually marks the early moments of European Enlightenment thought.
- Also influenced by the discoveries being made about other cultures and world through European travels in Asia and Africa.

The Spenserian Poetry

❖ Features of Spenserian poetry

- Preferred pastoral themes and subject
- Wrote narrative poetry
- Idealized the 'golden age' of the old England.
- Also wrote political, moral and religious allegories like Spenser's The Faerie Queen.

The Metaphysical Poetry

❖ Features of Metaphysical poetry

- Unusual logic images which were exaggerated and not always easy to understand
- The metaphors were strange and artificial and were called 'conceits'
- A mixture of wit and seriousness
- A poetry of both great religious fervour and human love/sensually, often combining the two in the same poem (Donne's poem are examples)
- The use of irony and paradox, which makes it difficult to decide whether the poet is being serious or casual

The religious poetry

❖ Features of Caroline religious poetry

- Faith, repentance, spiritual progress, perseverance and grace and the central theme of Caroline religious poetry
- It explores the tension worldly human desires and the will of God as well as the needs of the body and the call to spiritual duties.
- All the poets declare their inner turmoil in unconditionally accepting the word of God.

- Introspective and very personal, the poets are rarely interested in the large issues of religion culture. Their poetry is about a very personal experience of faith and religion.

The Cavalier poetry

❖ Features of cavalier poetry

- Gallantry and chivalry are central to the cavaliers
- The poetry was full of wit, smart responses to situation and clever complimentary remarks to the lover
- Flattery and high praise of the love's beauty and wisdom become integral to this kind of poetry
- The poets often complain about their lover's indifference. There is also the agony of separation in many of the poems
- A lot of eroticism is visible there
- Unlike the metaphysic, the cavaliers did not engage in serious debates and their poetry is much more simple, simple than the metaphysical poetry of Donne and others
- The lines in these poems are almost always short and precise, though the images may seem exaggerated today.

7.3 SOCIO-POLITICAL BACKGROUND

7.3.1 Jacobeans

The puritan surge began in the Elizabethan age resulted in the Westminster assembly. And after the death of Elizabeth 1603, James VI of Scotland becomes the James I of England. He brought up a Presbyterian. Robert Catesby and a group of provincial catholic, tried to assassinate king and they got arrested by the king; was known as Gunpowder plot. Plot is discovered and the conspirators were executed.

James wants to divine rights of the king in his Kingdom. There will be no bishop or priest between god & man. He determined to make English church subservient to his will, and ill-treatment with puritans. He wished a match between Charles I, and Infanta, daughter of the King of Spain. The princess had jilted Charles and so he turned to Henrietta Maria who was daughter of the French king Louis XIII and sister of future Louis XIV. She was a Catholic. People of England were frightened with the speculations about Henrietta Maria, as she might convert the King and create legacy of Catholic faith. This spoiled the common minds and political-religious scenario.

7.3.2 Caroline Period

Charles I succeeded James I in 1625. He too was like his father wants to divine rights and wants to reduce the parliament. The issue of money, led to a bitter quarrel between king and parliament. James and Charles both tried to raise money by taxes without leave of parliament. But Charles forced to accept the "petition of right", a document which declared that taxes not sanctioned by parliament were illegal. In 1629, he dissolved the parliament and ruled without it for 11 years, this period

1629 to 1640 is known as “The Eleven Years’ Tyranny”, which marked by ruthless suppression of parliament leader and other opponents of government like the star chamber and the ecclesiastical court of high commission. To recover the money he adopted several illegal takes like ‘ship money’ in 1634. A puritan squire, John Hampden refused to pay the taxes.

The religious situation was harsh by the time of the appointment of Laud as Archbishop of Canterbury. Laud’s High Church or pro-catholic policy was the real cause of civil war. He enforces the ritual in church and banned the puritan or non-conformist worship outside them. For this, the puritans migrated to America and Laud imposed Anglican worship on the Scottish church. Charles was forced to call parliament in order to raise money for team to defend England. With the help of Laud, he attempted to establish an absolute system of control. But it was too late for that. The lines were already drawn between the Cavaliers and the Roundheads. In 1639 Charles found himself involved in a Civil War. In 1640, on the advice of his chief minister Stratford forced to call parliament lasted only three weeks called the Short Parliament. And in same year again he called the parliament, was continued for twenty year (1640-1660) called Long Parliament. Under the leadership of Pym, Hampden, and Cromwell the long parliament annulled the illegal acts of the king, impeached and executed Laud and the Earl of Stafford, and abolished the much hated Star Chamber and the Court of High Commission. In 1642, Civil War begins; important War was the battles of Marston Moor (1644), Naseby (1645), and Preston (1648). Parliament secured the help of Scotland by signing the “Covenant” to establish Presbyterianism in England. The king was supported in civil war by his nephew Prince Rupert and the Highland royalist Montrose, but they were defeated by Oliver Cromwell, parliamentary leader.

7.3.3 Commonwealth Period

Oliver Cromwell has started his independent party. The Congregationalists, (the puritan sect) believed in freedom of church and allows all sects to worship as they pleased. Neither parliament nor the people in general wanted the King’s inspection or dominance. Cromwell therefore rid of the parliament of its moderate Presbyterians and forced the shorten parliament or ‘Rump’ to be called the King’s trial. Charles condemned and his head cut off on 30 January 1649. And Cromwell dissolved the Rump by force in 1653. And he called several parliaments but he did not get on with any of them. He resigns from the government and become the military dictator till his death in 1658. And the General Monk the powerful leader of the Army, called a free parliament. In the 1660, Charles II came into throne as king.

❖ Religious history of puritan age

Religiously the age was an ideal, the ideal of a national church. It is intestinally interesting to note that Charles called Irish rebels and Scotch Highland to his aid by promising to restore their national religions; and

the English puritans, turning to Scotland for help, entered into the solemn Covenant of 1643, establishing a national Presbyterianism, whose aims and they have explored the beliefs and ideologies of John Wycliffe and John Calvin.

1. The Bible represented the true law of God. So they always wish to reshapes the people on the ideologies of Bible.
2. They were against the rule of Bishop. Instead they wanted church to be managed by a group of ‘presbyters’.
3. They believed the voice of god in each man’s conscience and so no priest or bishop could rightly come.
4. They insisted on extreme austerity of worship, believing that images, ornaments, alter, rituals, embroidered surplices owned by the priests.
5. The Puritans were strict disciplinarians who stressed on devotions, prayers, and introspections.
6. They hated to see the Church being reduced to political body. They challenged Elizabethan religious settlement of 1559 to solve the religious debate. They didn’t accept the Tudor doctrine that every member of the state was automatically the member of state Church.

Anglican had restricted to puritans and non- conformists to worship their own. And Cromwell allowed them to worship as they pleased.

7.4 PURITAN AGE (TIMELINE)

Political	
1603	James I overruled Queen Elizabeth
1618	James I advocates Sunday recreation in opposition to Puritan sabbatarianism
1625-27	Charles I crowned king of England, Scotland and Ireland
1628	Oliver Cromwell became member
1640	Oliver Cromwell leads the “New Model Army” rebels and became lord protector, puritan morality became the law
1645	William Laud is beheaded by Puritans
1649	Cromwell and his government behead king Charles I
1658	Cromwell died and succeeded as a Lord Protector by his son Richard
1660	Charles II is restored to the Throne
Religious	
1611	King James’ Bible first published and used throughout the English speaking world
1637	Scottish prayer book published
Historical	
1608	Birth of john Milton
1616	Birth of Richard Baxter and John Owen; Death of William Shakespeare
1618	Thirty years war begin in central Europe
1642	English civil war break out
1648	The end of the thirty years war

Social	
1620	'The pilgrims' Puritans separatists who had fled to the Netherlands sail to America and found colony at Plymouth Massachusetts
Literary	
1604	James I rejected most puritan requests for reform included their "Millenary petition"
1613	First single language English dictionary published
1642	Closing of Theatres
1650	Marvell's ode upon Cromwell's return from Ireland

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION IN BRIEF

1) What was the Gunpowder Plot?

2) What was the importance of Charles I's marriage with Hennifer Maria and why people feared with it?

3) Why king had called the parliament in 1640? And what is short Parliament and Long Parliament?

4) Which were the important battles in the Civil War?

5) Significance of Petition of Right.

6) What was the “Eleven Year’s Tyranny?”

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2

STATE WHETHER THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ARE TRUE OR FALSE

1. Oliver Cromwell became the Lord Protector of England.
2. The theatres were closed in the year 1660
3. In the year 1629 Charles I dissolved the parliament.
4. Metaphysical poetry deals with conceits and metaphors.
5. Andrew Marvell is called the founder of metaphysical poetry.

7.5 LET US SUM UP

The puritan age marked as religious renaissance and ups and downs in the socio-politics in the history of English literature. The puritan age highlights the trauma in the history. It explored the poetry and other forms of literature. Earlier drama was in the trend; but here we can see the decline of drama and theatres were closed in 1642.

7.6 KEY WORDS

- **Congregationalists:** Congregational churches are Protestant churches in the Reformed tradition practicing Congregationalist church governance, in which each congregation independently and autonomously runs its own affairs.
- **Jacobean:** It is applied to writing of the period of James I of England.
- **Cavalier Poets:** A group of poets during the reign of Charles I (1625-1649) –Richard Lovelace, Thomas Carew, Sir John Suckling, Edmund Waller and Robert Herrick. The title Cavaliers derived from the Italian for horseman or knight. Spenserian
- **The Metaphysical Poets:** A group of poets of seventeenth century – Donne, Marvell, Vaughan, Herbert, Crashaw, Traherne. They used metaphors and conceits in their poetry at large.
- **Cavalier Poets:** A group of poets during the reign of Charles I (1625-1649) –Richard Lovelace, Thomas Carew, Sir John Suckling, Edmund Waller and Robert Herrick. The title Cavaliers derived from the Italian for horseman or knight.
- **Commonwealth:** The period from the execution of Charles I to the inauguration of the Protectorate under Oliver Cromwell’s rule till 1653. Proliferation of printed polemic, proto-newspapers and the suppression of dramatic activities are the chief features of this age.

7.7 BOOKS SUGGESTED

1. History of English literature by Elbert Alert
2. English Literature by W. J. Long
3. A Compendious History of English Literature by R. D. Trivedi
4. A Critical History of English Literature Vol. I & II by David Daiches

ANSWER KEY

(1-True, 2-False, 3-True, 4-True, 5-False)

UNIT-8**PURITAN AGE-2 : MAJOR WRITERS AND LITERARY WORKS****STRUCTURE****8.0 Objectives****8.1 Introduction****8.2 Major authors and their works****8.3 Let Us Sum Up****8.4 Key Words****8.5 Books Suggested****Answers**

8.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit we shall

- discuss various major authors of Puritan age and
- major works of this writers and period.
On completing this unit, you should be able to,
- have command over the major writers and works of Puritan age
- assimilate knowledge about this period through their works.

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The Puritan Age is significant in the development of various genres of literature in English. The European literature developed simultaneously and it affected the British Isles at large. The major impacting factor of this age is Christianity and Monarchy. Various prose forms got the first buds and the developmental phase led to the major genre of literature- Novel.

The Puritan's religion and socio-political background was the base of the literature of that time. The puritan literature is divided into three periods; the Jacobean (1603-1625), Caroline (1625-1649) and Commonwealth (1649-1660). Each period contributed variedly for the growth of this literature. Jacobean prose writers, Spenserian poets, The Metaphysical poets, religious poets and Cavalier poets all constructed the literature, what we now call Puritan Literature. They all crafted a new notion in literature. The influence of *The authorised version of the Bible* can be seen in the works of the Puritan writers. Donne's personal, religious experiences can be seen in his works; emotional appeal and some short of intellectual examples are the characteristics of his works. Donne also influenced the Metaphysical by his writings. This period has a craft-man of English literature –Milton. He is major contributor to English literature and language at large. By faith he was puritan. After

Milton ornate and plain prose trended. By the influences of Ben Johnson and Donne, the metaphysical poets such as George Herbert, Richard Crashaw, Henry Vaughan, Abraham Cowley and Andrew Marvell; their poetry showed another dimension to the development of poetry. Milton, Robert Burton, Sir Thomas Browne, Jeremy Taylor and Izaak Walton attacked with their satires. The satires were on the contemporary society and religious awakening in the society through their works. Milton's *Paradise Lost* is the epitome of this. After the decline of drama in 1642, prose was the medium of enjoyment of the class. *Areopagitica* (1644) by Milton showed the struggle for freedom for speech and expression. Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* deals with two types of melancholy; religious melancholy and love melancholy. Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* (the religion of a Doctor), was written in 1635. It appeared in 1642, became immediately popular, and cleared the notion of religion. Here is the list of some prominent writer of the time; John Donne (1572-1631), George Herbert (1593-1633), John Milton (1608-1674), Andrew Marvell (1621-1678), Robert Burton (1577-1640), Thomas Browne (1605- 1682), Izaak Walton (1593-1683), Francis Bacon (1561-1626), Thomas Carew (1598-1639) and Abraham Cowley (1618-67) and their important works in the detail.

8.2 MAJOR AUTHORS AND THEIR WORKS

John Donne (1572-1631)

George Herbert (1593-1633)

John Milton (1608-1674)

Andrew Marvell (1621-1678)

Robert Burton (1577-1640)

Thomas Browne (1605- 1682)

Izaak Walton (1593-1683)

Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

John Donne (1572-1631)

John Donne was born in London in the year 1557; his father was a rich iron merchant. He was a catholic by religion with paternal and maternal background. His education was could not be continued in Oxford and Cambridge due to his religion. Such an experience generally sets man's religious standards for life. Later on he declared himself as a humble Christian. He was generous enough to share his wealth with his relatives. During that time he had written two best of his poems, *The storm* and *The calm*. After journey of Europe for three years, he became secretary to Lord Egerton by marrying Anne More without his patron's permission. Donne's 'Pseudo Martyr' attracted the attention and favor of James I. He chose to become a preacher, affluent and intellectual, and grew rapidly. Within a short span of just few years he became the greatest one and Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in London. Donne's work embodies mystery; something is hidden and eager to reveal itself. It is the World of great exploration and deep understanding. His religious poetry dominates after 1610. The nineteen *holy sonnets* and *A Hymn to God the Father*, after his wife's death in 1617 are the masterpieces. The two are very

intense and depicts the inner-self of him. His prose work *Pseudo-Martyr* (1610) is polemical prose tract in English. The pamphlet war got another masterpiece and it is considered the first of prints for Donne. It advocated taking the Oath of Allegiance of James I of England for the people of England. The best prose was his *Deytions* (1614), which give an account of his spiritual struggle during a serious illness. And finest sermon was *Death's Duell* (1630); contain many features of his poetry. Intensely personal, their appeal was primarily emotional, and Donne used a dramatic technique which had a great hold on his audience.

Jesus Cora Alonso divided Donne's poetry into three main groups: - 'one, satires and cynically anti-Petrarchan love poems, two, sincere, deeply felt neo-platonic amatory poems and philosophical complimentary verses to influential female friends; and three, his devotional poems. *Devotion upon emergent Occasions* (1624) was a prose work dedicated to Charles I. *Deaths Duel* (1623) was last sermon by Donne. 'The Flea', 'The Sun Rising', 'The Good-Morrow', 'The Canonisation', 'A Valediction Forbidding mourning', 'The Ecstasy', 'elegy XX To His Mistress Going to Bed', 'Holy Sonnet X Death be not Proud', 'Holy Sonnet XIV Batter my heart, three-person'd God', 'Hymn to God, My God, In my Sickness', 'Good Friday', these were the best poems of John Donne. *Holy Sonnets* was dedicated to Magdalen Newport, mother of George Herbert.

George Herbert (1593-1633)

"O day most calm, most bright," sang Herbert, through this we can stake line as expressive of the whole spirit of his writing. He has written some noble verses of prayer or aspiration, which expresses the underlying Puritan spirit of his age. None of his poems was published during his lifetime. Herbert's chief work *The Temple* consists of over one hundred and fifty short poems suggested by the Church, her holidays and ceremonials, and the experience of the Christian life. The first poem, "The Church Porch," is the longest and, though polished with a care that foreshadows the classic school, the least poetical. *The Temple* is a wonderful collection of condensed sermons, wise precepts, and moral lesson, suggesting Chaucer's "Good Counsel". Among the remaining poems of *The Temple* one of the most suggestive was "The Pilgrimage". Here in six short stanzas, every line close-packed with thought, probably the best known of all his poems is the one called "The Pulley," which generally appears, however, under the name "Rest," or "The Gifts of God" and *Love*, which may be read in any anthology, are enough to illustrate the quiet, soothing quality of his poems. The poems are peculiarly honest, quiet, and colloquial, and touched with a quaint humour. They are metaphysical in their unusual conceits and in the blend of thought and feeling. Herbert was a careful artist, precise and simple in expression, fond of unusual metrical patterns (as in *Easter wings*), and a lover of harmony. He himself described the works as "pictures of the many spiritual conflict that have passed between God and my soul, before I could subject mine to the will of Jesus my master; in whose service I

have now found perfect freedom.” The poems are peculiarly honest, intimate, sincere, and modest.

The best works of Herbert were *Oratio Qua auspiciatissimum Sernissimi Principis Caroli* (1623), *Memoriae Matris Sacrum* (1627), *The Temple*, *Sacred Poems* and *Private ejaculations* (1633), Herbert’s *Remains or Sundry Pieces Of that sweet singer of the Temple*-consisting of his collected writings from priest to the temple; or, *The Country person his character and rule of holy life* and *Jacula Prudentum or Outlandish Proverbs, sentences and c...* as well as letter, several prayers and three Latin poems (1652).

Milton (1608-1674)

Milton was born and brought up in London. He received his education at Cambridge. He was known as ‘The Lady of Christ’ because of his long hair and physical appearance. His ideas after long silence create the big change and inspired him to write the great works in literature. He had much concern for mankind and struggle for human freedom. His works instigated protect and defend the divine right of a people. There are two incident that most affected the life of Milton; Marriage and his Blindness. In 1643, he married to Mary Powell, their marriage was unsuccessful. Therefore, he had written *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* and *Tetrachordon*. In 1653, his first wife died and he married another woman and she was celebrated in his works and in 1663, he married once again and she helped him after his blindness. *On the Morning of Christ’s Nativity*, *Lycidas*, *L’Allegro*, *II Penseroso*, *Arcades*, *Comus*, *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, *Eikon Basilike* (*Royal Image*), *Eikonoklaster* (*Image Breker*), *Defensio Pro Populo Anglicano*, *Areopagitica* and *Samson Agoniste* are the best works of Milton. *On His Blindness* was the reflection of grief in darkness and spirit of sublime. When he was imprisoned, he wrote *Eikon Basilike* (*Royal Image*), a description of king’s nature and his thoughts, condemning the Puritans. It becomes famous and its arguments were against the commonwealth. *Eikonoklaster* (*Image Breker*) was published in 1649, which break the idea of *Eikon Basilike* (*Royal Image*). *Defensio Pro Populo Anglicano* (1651) was most controversial work in Literature. It was political argument in the support of current government. *Lycidas*, *L’Allegro* (the joyous or happy man), *II Penseroso* (the pensive or thoughtful man) twin poems, one is denoting the happiest man in the world in the presence of nature, where everything is beautiful and pleasurable. Whereas in second poem *II Penseroso* (the pensive or thoughtful man) whole atmosphere is same but a man is not happy. The mood of the poet is entirely different here. One poem presents the beautiful nature of morning or atmosphere of sun rising, while another poem deals with atmosphere of sunset. Everything is same but person’s mood is not as equal as it was in the first poem. In *Masque of Comus* (1634,) a lady and her two brothers lose their way. These brothers leave their sister for in search of guide. The lady falls in the trap of Comus, who forced the lady to drink the potion, which turn the face into those beasts.

Though the lady fight against Comus with chastity, she is victim and trapped in temptations. Later the divine spirit released her from Comus. Though many critics have different interpretation about *Comus*, the lack of dramatic interest, it is interesting and the argument was irrelevant. In *The Triumph of Virtue*, virtue and innocence is the theme of the masque, where both are walking on the same path, without harm. Here, it presents the description of triumph of good over evil. *Lycidas* (1637) is the pastoral elegy on the death of his college friend Edward King, who drowned in the Irish Sea. 'On His Deceased Wife', 'To The Nightingale', 'On Reaching the Age of Twenty-Three', 'The Massacre in Piedmond' were the best sonnet of Milton. If we look the prose work of Milton, we find the *Areopagitica*. It is agitation against the law on abundance of freedom of press. Where he argues with government to free the publication houses and allow the press. *Paradise Lost*, the story deals with Adam, how he fell at the temptation by Satan, how he is punished for his sins and some critics says that it is manifestation of satan. *Samson Agonistes*, the story of Samson, the mighty champion of Israel, after his blindness at the old age, is working as a slave among the philistines. This is the successful tragedy because of personal agony and leading character is taken from dramas. These both cause leads the play successful in Literature.

Andrew Marvell (1621-78)

Andrew Marvell is a puritan poet and friend of John Milton. He assisted Milton as the Latin Secretary. His poetry combines the clarity and grace of Ben Jonson with the metaphysical wit of Donne. Marvell-whose best poems were written in the early 1650's and did not publish during his lifetime. He is remembered for the poem *To His Coy mistress*. Marvell's frankly sensuous enjoyment of nature, reminiscent of Keats, is best seen in his *Thoughts in a Garden*. In his *Horatian ode upon Cromwell's return from Ireland*, he pays his homage to the protector and gives an imperishable tribute to the royal dignity of Charles I. Horatian, too, in another sense, is Marvell's delight in gardens, fields and woods, so that, in a special sense he was the poet of the open air. He wrote poetry on Nature, The Mower, Religion, and Love, like *upon Appleton house*, *Bermudas*, *The Garden*, *the mower against Gardens*, *the mower to the Go-Worms*, *Damon Mower*, *the mower's song*, *a dialogue, between soul and created pleasure*, *A dialogue between soul and body*, *the coronet*, *eyes and fears*, *the nymph complaining for the death of her fawn*, *young love*, *To his coy Mistress*, *the unfortunate lover*, *Daphnis and Chloe*, *the definition of love*, these are his best poetical insights. He wrote some poetry during Political era of Cromwell.

Robert Burton (1577-1640)

Burton was a clergyman who resided permanently at Oxford. Of a brooding and melancholic temper, he was a bookworm who devoured the libraries of oxford and wrote *The Anatomy of Melancholy* to get relieve from his depression and was published in the year 1621. The book treats

the causes, symptoms and cures of melancholy or rather the disease called melancholia, which is now attributed to a bad liver. In *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, Burton described four different temperaments arising from four humours in the human body. The melancholic would have a preponderance of black bile, the choleric, of yellow bile, the phlegmatic, of phlegm the sanguine, of blood. *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, deals with two chief types of melancholy; Love melancholy and Religious melancholy. Ostensibly, a medical work, the book is really an anatomy of human folly enlivened with the author's grave humour. It is full of Latin quotations, sometimes with their translations, from authors, ancient and modern, known and unknown. The book is really an encyclopaedia of its professed subject as well as of curious learning and offers abundant material for learned conversation. He describes his style, "I neglect phrases, and labour wholly to inform my reader's understanding, and not to please his ear." Unbounded curiosity about man and a humane and sensible concern for his welfare were perhaps Burton's chief qualities; they are sufficient to give a tone but not to provide a method or principle of integration to his work. The long section on "heroically or love melancholy, with its powers, causes, symptoms, and cures, is the richest part of the book to modern eyes and its quizzical yet sympathetic tone, its profusion of information with a refusal to come down on any side of a controversy, is characteristic of Burton.

Thomas Browne (1605-82)

He was born in London, established himself at Norwich, the city with his life was peculiarly associated. The Civil War disturbed the years of his maturity, but Brown, though Royalist and anti-Puritan by instinct and conviction, was so much a man of science as to feel that the struggle was no active concern of his. He pursued his quiet beneficent life of study and healing and waited for better time. Charles II knighted him 1671. An ideally happy and useful life ended on his birthday, 19 October 1682. Sir Thomas Browne's works are small tracts. The first of them, *Religio Medici* (the religion of a Doctor), was written in 1635. It was appeared in 1642 and became immediately popular. It was translated into many languages such as Latin, French, German, Dutch, and Italian. It was reprinted about eight times during his lifetime. It is an attempt to make his religious concept clear in his mind and to defend himself and his profession against the ancient charge of impiety, that doctors were atheists. He declares, "Every man's own reasoned the best Oedipus." In Greek and English titles *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (1646-72) *emica* and *Vulgar Errors*. It is a discursive account of the errors and superstitions not only of the vulgar, as its title might suggest, but also of the learned. It wants to expose the popular errors: "that a drowned man's body rises on the ninth day; an elephant has no joints; a pelican opens her breast to feed her young ones with her blood." *The Garden of Cyrus* is printed with *Hydriotaphia*, is the best example, in Sainsbury's phrase, of Browne's 'mysticism fantastic'. *A letter to a friend* and *Christian Morals* both are interconnected, as some of the passages are common to both, the latter

starts with a description of a T.B patient with the details of the changes wrought by approaching death, passes to thoughts and precepts. These reflections and precepts in an expanded form make up the subject matter of *Christian Morals*.

Izaak Walton (1593-1683)

He was a small tradesman in London who had a passion for fishing. He was acquainted with the clergymen of his day and was fond of literature and literary men. He was the first professional English biographer. His intimate biographies of Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Hooker, and Bishop Sanderson show his simplicity and hero-worship. But his fame rests on his *The Compleat Angler, or the Contemplative Man's Recreation* published in 1653. The *Angler* is a "piscatorial classic." It is a book of general recreation that appeals to all, anglers and non-anglers alike. It is in the form of a dialogue between the author Piscator (fisherman) and his disciple Venator (hunter) who have been persuaded to give up his cruel sport in favour of the gentle art of angling. Besides instructing Venator in the art of catching various kinds of fish, Piscator gives him a good deal of religious and moral instruction. The charm of the book consists in its delightful pictures of the English countryside and in its revelation of author's personality- his sweet simplicity, his quaint and humorous fancies, his old world wisdom, his unaffected piety and above all his transparent purity of heart. Walton himself describes it as "a recreation of recreation". After the death of Donne he composed *An elegy*, dedicated to Donne.

Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

Bacon was meditating an ambitious scheme for laying anew the foundations of human knowledge on which could be reared an ever-increasing understanding and control of nature. It is known as the Great Instauration (or Renewal). He wrote *The advancement of learning book I* and *The advancement of learning book II* and *New Atlantis*. *New Atlantis*, published incomplete in 1627, is a slight work; it describes a group of seafarers come upon an unknown island in the South Sea, where they are hospitably entertained and told of the high state of morality and civilization prevailing there, notably of the wonders of Salomon's house, a research institution in the description of which Bacon illustrates his own ideas of how research should be carried on. It all seems rather naïve in an age when scientific research is as highly developed and as much taken for granted as it is now; but it is interesting as providing further evidence of Bacon's desire to popularize his views of the importance of experimental science, that "commerce between the mind of man and the nature of things, which is more precious than anything on earth" as he called it in his *Magna Instauration*.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1
ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

1. Give the timeline of John Donne.

2. Name of important authors of Puritan age.

3. Why Religion is the key feature of Puritan Age?

4. What is *Metaphysical* poetry?

5. *Religio Medici* by Thomas Browne, is about?

6. Marvell's frankly sensuous enjoyment of nature, reminiscent of Keats, is best seen in his?

7. Who is the protagonist of *Paradise Lost*?

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2

State Whether The Following Statements Are True Or False

1. 'Death Duell' is a sermon written by George Herbert.
2. Milton is known as 'The Lady of Christ'.
3. 'To his Coy Mistress' is written by Andrew Marvell.
4. Izaak Walton is the author of 'New Atlantis'.
5. Religio Medici was written by Thomas Brown in the year 1635.

8.3 LET US SUM UP

As we have seen the writer and their works in details, we can categorise them into the Metaphysical Poets, Cavalier poets, ornate and plane prose writers. For The Puritans, God become easier for everyone to understand and more relevant in their day to day life. A first person narrative, personal point of view- journals, diaries and day to day experience, religious theme, story of God, strict to order of society, feeling of surrounded by sin, and symbolism are seen in writing of these writers.

8.4 KEY WORDS

- **The Metaphysical Poets:** A group of poets of seventeenth century –Donne, Marvell, Vaughan, Herbert, Crashaw, Traherne. They used metaphors and conceits in their poetry at large.
- **Cavalier Poets:** A group of poets during the reign of Charles I (1625-1649) –Richard Lovelace, Thomas Carew, Sir John Suckling, Edmund Waller and Robert Herrick. The title Cavaliers derived from the Italian for horseman or knight.
- **Jacobean:** It is applied to writing of the period of James I of England.
- **Catholic:** a member of the Roman Catholic Church.
- **Protestant:** a follower of any of the Western Christian Churches that are separate from the Roman Catholic Church in accordance with the principles of the Reformation, including the Baptist, Presbyterian, and Lutheran Churches.

8.5 BOOKS SUGGESTED

1. History of English literature by Edward Albert
2. English Literature by W. J. Long
3. A Compendious History of English Literature by R. D. Trivedi
4. A Critical History of English Literature by David Daiches, Volume 1 & 2

ANSWERS

1-False, 2-True, 3-True, 4-False, 5-True

UNIT-9**RESTORATION AGE-1 HISTORICAL
BACKGROUND AND CHARACTERISTICS****STRUCTURE****9.0 Objectives****9.1 Introduction****9.2 Historical Background of The Restoration age****9.3 Literary Characteristics of Restoration age****9.3.1 Rise of Neo-classicism****9.3.2 Imitation of the Ancient Masters****9.3.3 Imitation of the French Masters****9.3.4 Correctness and Appropriateness****9.3.5 Realism and formalism****9.4 Poetry of Restoration age****9.5 Prose of Restoration age****9.6 Restoration Drama****9.6.1 The Restoration Heroic Tragedy****9.6.2 Restoration Comedy of Manners****9.7 Let us sum up****9.8 Key Words****9.9 Suggested Reading****Answers**

9.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit you shall learn

- To discuss the historical background of the restoration period
- To discuss the major literary characteristics of the restoration period
- To discuss the development of poetry, prose and drama in the restoration period
- To discuss the development of heroic tragedy and comedy of manners in the period

9.1 INTRODUCTION

The Restoration brought many changes to the Great Britain. After the prolonged civil and religious conflict of the seventeenth century, Britain attained political stability. The countryside kept its seemingly timeless agricultural rhythms, even as the nation's great families consolidated their control over the land and those who worked it. Change came most dramatically to cities. The cities absorbed much of a national population that almost doubled in the period, to ten million. The public but nongovernmental institutions and practices became powerful in the period. The theaters, coffee houses, concert halls, pleasure gardens, lending libraries, picture exhibitions, and shopping districts made their footprints in London. Reflecting and stimulating this activity, an expanding variety of printed works vied to interest literate women and men, whose numbers grew to include most of the middle classes and many among the poor. Civil society also linked people to an increasingly global economy, as they shopped for diverse goods from around the world. The rich and even the moderately well off could profit or go broke from investments in joint-stock companies, which controlled much of Britain's international trade, including its lucrative traffic in slaves.

At home, new systems of canals and turnpikes stimulated domestic trade, industry, and travel, bringing distant parts of the country closer together. The cohesion of the nation also depended on ideas of social order—some old and clear, many subtle and new. An ethos of politeness came to prevail, a standard of social behavior to which more and more could aspire yet that served to distinguish the privileged sharply from the rude and vulgar. This and other ideas, of order and hierarchy, of liberty and rights, of sentiment and sympathy, helped determine the ways in which an expanding diversity of people could seek to participate in Britain's thriving cultural life.

9.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE RESTORATION PERIOD

The Restoration of 1660, the return of Charles Stuart and the monarchy to England, brought hope to a divided nation. Almost all of Charles's subjects welcomed him home. After the abdication of Richard Cromwell in 1659, the country had appeared at the point of chaos, and Britain was eager to believe that their king would bring order and law and a spirit of mildness back into the national life. But no political settlement could be stable until the religious issues had been resolved. The restoration of the monarchy meant that the established church would also be restored, and though Charles was willing to pardon or ignore many former enemies, the bishops and Anglican clergy were less tolerant of dissent.

When Parliament reimposed the Book of Common Prayer in 1662 and then in 1664 banned Nonconformists from religious meetings outside the established church, thousands of clergymen resigned their livings, and the prisons were filled with preachers like John Bunyan who refused to be silenced. In 1673, the Test Act required all holders of civil and military

offices to take the sacrament in an Anglican church and to deny belief in transubstantiation. Thus, Protestant Dissenters and Roman Catholics were largely excluded from public life. Alexander Pope, a Catholic, could not attend a university, own land or vote. The scorn of Anglicans for Nonconformist zeal or "enthusiasm" bursts out in Samuel Butler's popular *Hudibras* (1663), a caricature of Presbyterians and Independents. And English Catholics were widely regarded as potential traitors and thought to have set the Great Fire that destroyed much of London in 1666.

Yet the victory of the established church did not resolve the constitutional issues that had divided Charles I and Parliament. Charles II had promised to govern through Parliament but secretly tried to merge royal power. He tried to hide his Catholic sympathies and avoided a test of strength with Parliament. In 1678 the report of the Popish Plot, in which Catholics would rise and murder their Protestant foes, terrified London. No doubt, the charge turned out to be a fraud still the House of Commons exploited the fear by trying to force Charles to exclude his Catholic brother, James, duke of York, from succession to the throne.

The disorder of this period is captured brilliantly by Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681). Finally, Charles defeated the Exclusion Bill by dissolving Parliament. But the crisis resulted in a basic division of the country between two new political parties: the Tories, who supported the king, and the Whigs, the king's opponents. Neither party could live with James II. After he came to the throne in 1685, he claimed the right to make his own laws, suspended the Test Act, and began to fill the army and government with fellow Catholics. The birth of James's son in 1688 brought matters into focus. Secret negotiations paved the way for the Dutchman William of Orange, a champion of Protestantism and the husband of James's Protestant daughter Mary. William landed with a small army in southwestern England and marched toward London. As he advanced the king's allies melted away, and James fled to a permanent exile in France. But the house of Stuart would be heard from again. For more than half a century, some loyal Jacobites, especially in Scotland, supported James, his son, and his grandson as the legitimate rulers of Britain. Moreover, a good many writers, from Aphra Behn and Dryden to Robert Burns, privately sympathized with Jacobitism. But after the failure of one last rising in 1745, the cause would dwindle gradually into a wistful sentiment. In retrospect, the coming of William and Mary in 1688—the Glorious, or Bloodless, Revolution—came to be seen as the beginning of a stabilized, unified Great Britain.

In 1689, a Bill of Rights revoked James's actions and it limited the powers of the Crown, reaffirmed the supremacy of Parliament, and guaranteed some individual rights. The same year the Toleration Act relaxed the strain of religious conflict by granting a limited freedom of worship to Dissenters so long as they swore allegiance to the Crown. This proved to be a workable compromise; and with the passage of the Act of Settlement in 1701, the difficult problems that had so long divided England seemed resolved. The principles established in 1689 endured unaltered in essentials until the Reform Bill of 1832.

9.3 LITERARY CHARACTERISTICS OF RESTORATION AGE

Restoration literature indicated the complete breaking of ties with the Renaissance literature. It reflected the spirit of the age. The spirit of corruption and moral laxity, which were predominant in the social life of the restoration, are reflected in literature. The following are the major characteristics of the period:

9.3.1 Rise of Neo-classicism

The Restoration marks an entire break with the past. The people believed in the present, the real and the material. Men learnt to fear individual enthusiasm, and therefore they tried to discourage it by setting up ideals of conduct in accordance with reason and common sense, to which all men should adapt themselves. Rules of etiquette and social conventions were established and the problem of life became that of self-expression within the narrow bounds, which were thus prescribed. All these tendencies were reflected in the literature of this period. The writers, both in prose and poetry, agreed upon the rules and principles in accordance with which they should write. Rules and literary conventions became more important than the depth and seriousness of the subject matter to the writers of this period. They expressed superficial manners and customs of the aristocratic and urban society and did not interfere into the mysteries of human mind and heart.

9.3.2 Imitation of the Ancient Masters

The authors of the period turned to the ancient writers for guidance and inspiration. It was generally believed that the ancients had reached the height of excellence and the modern poets could do no better than model their writings on the classics. Thus grew the neo-classical school of poetry. The neo-classicists or pseudo-classicists could not climb to great imaginative heights or could not penetrate deeply into human emotions. They directed their attention to the slavish imitation of rules and ignored the importance of the subject matter. This habit was noticeable in the age of Dryden.

9.3.3 Imitation of the French Masters

King Charles II and his companions had spent the period of exile in France. They demanded that poetry and drama should follow the style to which they had become accustomed in France. Pepys wrote in his diary that he was bored to see Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* (1600). The Italian influence had been dominant in Elizabethan period. Now began the period of French influence, which showed itself in English literature for the next century. The famous French writers like Corneille, Racine, Moliere and Boileau were imitated. English writers imitated the French blindly. The French influence is seen in the coarseness and indecency of the Restoration comedy of manners. The combined influence of French and classical models of tragedy is seen in

the heroic tragedy. The French influence is responsible for the growth and popularity of opera.

9.3.4 Correctness and Appropriateness

The works of the authors of the Restoration period was imitative. They abandoned freedom altogether and slavishly followed the rules. Edward Albert writes in *History of English literature* (1979): —Thus they evolved a number of —rules which can usefully be summarized in the injunction —Be Correct, correctness means avoidance of enthusiasm, moderate opinions moderately expressed, strict care and accuracy in poetic technique; and humble imitation of the style of Latin Classics.

The new tendency, which reached its climax in the Age of Pope, is very clearly marked in the literature of the Restoration period. To Dryden Dr. Johnson applied the term —Augustan, saying that Dryden did to English literature what Augustus did to Rome, which he found —of brick and left of marble. Dryden was the first representative of the new ideas that were to dominate English literature till the end of the eighteenth century.

9.3.5 Realism and formalism

Restoration literature is realistic. It was very much concerned with life in London, and with details of dress, fashions and manners. —The early Restoration writers, observes W. J. Long in *English literature its history and its significance for the life of the English-speaking world* (1909) —sought to paint realistic pictures of corrupt court and society, and emphasized vices rather than virtues and gave us coarse, low plays without interest or moral significance. Like Hobbes, they saw only the externals of man, his body and appetites, not his soul and his ideals.... Later, however, this tendency to realism became more wholesome. While it neglected romantic poetry, in which youth is eternally interested, it led to a keener study of the practical motives, which govern human action. The Restoration writers avoided all extravagances of thought and language and aimed at achieving directness and simplicity of expression. Dryden accepted the excellent rule for his prose, and adopted the heroic couplet, as the next best thing for the greater part of this poetry. It is largely due to Dryden that —writers developed formalism of style, that precise, almost mathematical elegance, miscalled classicism, which ruled the English literature for the next century.

9.4 POETRY OF RESTORATION AGE

The poetry than the subject matter of the Restoration period is formal, intellectual and realistic. In it, form is more important. S. A. Brooke in *Some Account of the English Stage, from the Restoration in 1660 to 1880* (1832) writes: —The artificial style succeeded to any extinguished the natural, or to put it otherwise, a more intellectual poetry finally overcame poetry in which emotion always accompanied thought.

(i) **John Dryden (1631-1700)**: Dryden was the first of the new, as Milton was the last of the former school of poetry. He was a versatile poet. *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681) is a fine, finished satire on contemporary

political situation. *The Medal* (1682) is an attack on Shaftesbury. *Mac Flecknoe* (1682) is a biting attack on a former friend, Thomas Shadwell. *Religio Laici* (1682) and *The Hind and the Panther* (1687) are two doctrinal poems. Dryden appears as a great storyteller in verse in *The Fables*. As a lyric poet, his fame rests on a song for St. Cecilia's Day (1687) and *On Alexander's Feast* (1697). Dryden is the representative poet of his age. He began the neo-classical age in literature. It was his influence and example, which lifted the classic couplet for many years as the accepted measure of serious English poetry.

(ii) Samuel Butler (1612-1680): Butler's *Hudibras* (1684) is a pointed satire on Puritans. It was influenced by the satires of Rabelais and Cervantes. It has genuine flashes of comic insight. It is a great piece of satirical poetry and it stands next to Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681). Butler is a remarkable figure in the poetic development of the Restoration period.

9.5 PROSE OF RESTORATION AGE

The Restoration marks the beginning of modern prose. William Henry Hudson in *An Introduction to the Study of Literature* (1998) discusses Matthew Arnold's remarks: —the Restoration marks the birth of our modern English prose. It is by its organism – an organism opposed to length and involvement, and enabling us to be clear, plain and short – that English prose after the Restoration breaks with the styles of the times preceding it, finds the true law of prose and becomes modern, becomes, in spite of superficial differences, the style of our own day. The spread of the spirit of common sense and of the critical temper of mind; the love of definiteness and clarity; and of the hatred of the pedantic and obscure have contributed to the development of English prose. It was an age of intellectualism and rationalism, the qualities, which are essential for prose. The growing interest in rationalism and the advancement of science greatly aided the general movement towards precision and lucidity of expression, which are the essential qualities of good prose style. Various political parties and groups, and growing interest in day-to-day activities encouraged journalism, which needed simple, straightforward prose style. The Coffee houses and drawing rooms attracted the intellectuals and general public for discussions on various topics of general interest. Thus an easy and conversational style, which properly expressed the tastes and the intellectual make-up of the new reading public, evolved. Thus, various factors contributed to the evolution of modern prose during the Restoration period. John Dryden (1631-1700) was one of the greatest prose writers of this period. His prefaces and his famous *Essay on Dramatic Poetry* (1668) make him —the leader of that modern prose in which the style is easy, unaffected, moulded to the subject, and in which proper words are placed in their proper places. John Bunyan (1632-1704) wrote two prose allegories, *Grace Abounding* (1666), *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) and *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* (1680). Bunyan is called a pioneer of English novel. *The Pilgrim's Progress* is remarkable for impressive characters, presentation

of contemporary life and dramatic interest. Bunyan's style is simple, clear, lucid, Biblical and colloquial.

The diaries of the period are important in terms of style and new form. There are two diary writers who need to be introduced. The Diary of Sir John Pepys (1633-1703) is remarkable for the unaffected naturalness of style and narrative skill. As a historical document it provides an interesting view of the life of Restoration London. John Evelyn's Diary (1818) was written with an eye on the public. It is a more finished production in the manner of style. Other writers who deserve mention are Lord Halifax, Sir William Temple, Thomas Hobbes, and Sir John Locke.

9.6 RESTORATION DRAMA

The theatres, which were closed in 1642, were opened during the Restoration. They became the riotous haunt of the gentry class. Consequently, the plays written for the play houses were distinctly calculated by the authors to appeal to a courtly and cavalier audience. It is this that explains the rise of the heroic tragedy and the development of the comedy of manners. The heroic tragedy appealed to artificial, aristocratic sentiments on the subject of honor. And the Restoration comedy of manners reflected the morally vicious but intellectually brilliant atmosphere of the saloons and the chocolate houses.

9.6.1 The Restoration Heroic Tragedy

The Restoration tragedy is also known as the Heroic Tragedy. The influence of French romance and drama produced its first important result in the form of the heroic play. Bonamy Dobree in *Restoration Tragedy* (1929) comments on the Restoration Tragedy: —As regards Restoration Tragedy the classical formal element was already there with Ben Johnson, the heroic aspects were adumbrated, often in Fletcher and Massinger, and even in Shakespeare. Coriolanus is a figure of heroic tragedy and so indeed in Tamburlaine. Viola is a heroic woman.... The Restoration Tragedy is artificial. Its emotions are unreal. According to Dobree the fantastic ideas of valour, the absurd notions of dauntless, unquenchable love of Restoration Tragedy —do not correspond with experience. It mainly deals with conflict between love and honour. John Dryden was the principal writer of the Heroic tragedy. His famous tragedies are *Tyrannick Love* (1670), *Conquest of Granada* (1672) and *All for Love or The World Well Lost* (1677). In Dryden's heroic plays we find a hero of superhuman powers and with superhuman ideals; there is a heroine of unsurpassed beauty and constancy; there is an inner conflict in the minds of several characters between love and honour; and there is a striving story of fighting and martial enthusiasm, filled with intense dramatic interest. *All For Love* is the finest tragedy of this period. It is a tragedy written in blank verse. It is also considered as imitation of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* (1623). The central theme of the play is the love between Antony and Cleopatra, the unlawful love. The tragedy focuses on the last hours of the lives of its hero and heroine. Antony, Cleopatra, Ventidius, Dollabella and Octavius are the major characters of the play.

Another playwright of the restoration period was Thomas Otway. He wrote *Alcibiades* (1675), *Don Carlos* (1676) , *The Orphan* (1680) and finally *Venice Preserved* (1682) which is considered to be the masterpiece of Thomas Otway. Otway's source for the play was a French novel *A conspiracy of the Spaniards against the state of Venice* (1675), by L'abbé de Saint-Réal. It is the best example of a Restoration verse tragedy with some genuinely comic moments.

9.6.2 Restoration Comedy of Manners

Comedy of manners is used as the synonyms of restoration comedy. It is also called sentimental comedy. The masterpieces of the genre are William Wycherley's *The Country Wife* (1675) and William Congreve's *The Way of the World* (1700). Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) and Richard Sheridan's *The Rivals* (1775), *The School for Scandal* (1777).

A careful examination of the periods in which this comedy has emerged in England reveals the fact that high style and fashion identified the behavior of the society. The restoration era was the age of the beau and his imitator, the fop; dress and mannerism continued to be important. It is a style of dramatic comedy that reflects the life, ideals and manners of upper class society. The subject of comedy of manners is the way people behave, the manners they employ in a social context. The chief concerns of the characters are sex and money. It depicts the relations and intrigues of men and women belong to polished sections of society. Restoration comedy of manners was influenced by Ben Jonson's comedy of humors. Deriving inspiration from Jonson's comedies, the Comedy of manners takes a completely new coloration combining a humor and critical trait that the English theatre had never known before. According to Julia Stefanova, the comedy of Manners depicts a small world, which has a distinct territory of its own the fashionable parts of the London of Charles II's time. Its main activities take place in the public garden like Hyde Park, St. James's Park, Mulberry Garden, fashionable clubs, houses and drawing rooms of the aristocratic classes.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS -1

Answers The Following Questions.

1. Why do you think that comedy and satire became so important during the Restoration period? What does this suggest about the perspective of the writers of this era?

2. Restoration literature is defined by a political event i.e the restoration of monarchy in England in 1660. What does the Restoration period teach us about the relationship between literature and politics?

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3. British writing of the Restoration era is often called "neoclassical". Why is this?

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4. Discuss the development of prose in the restoration period.

5. Write short notes on:

- (a) Heroic tragedy (b) Comedy of Manners

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS -2

CHOOSE ONE OPTION FOR BELOW GIVEN QUESTIONS.

1. What happened in 1707 that would forever alter the relationship between England, Wales, and Scotland?
 - a) The trial and execution of Mary, Queen of Scots
 - b) The Toleration Act
 - c) The failed invasion of the Spanish Armada
 - d) The Act of Union
2. Historical events often influence literature. Which of the following did NOT occur during the Restoration period?
 - a) Charles II was restored to the throne
 - b) The French Revolution
 - c) The Great Fire of London
 - d) The Exclusion Bill Crisis
3. What was "restored" in 1660?
 - a) The monarchy, in the person of Charles II
 - b) The dominance of the Tory Party
 - c) The "Book of Common Prayer"
 - d) Toleration of religious dissidents
4. What literary work best captures a sense of the political turmoil, particularly regarding the issue of religion, just after the Restoration?
 - a) Gay's *Beggar's Opera*
 - b) Butler's *Hudibras*

- c) Pope's *Dunciad*
 - d) Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*
5. Who was deposed from the English throne in the Glorious, or Bloodless, Revolution in 1688?
 - a) Elizabeth I
 - b) James II
 - c) George II
 - d) William and Mary
 6. Who became the first "prime minister" of Great Britain in the reign of George II?
 - a) Henry St. John
 - b) Robert Harley
 - c) John Churchill
 - d) Robert Walpole
 7. What name is given to the English literary period that emulated the Rome of Virgil, Horace, and Ovid?
 - a) Augustan
 - b) Metaphysical
 - c) Romantic
 - d) Neo-Romantic
 8. In what year did the Restoration period begin?
 - a) 1694
 - b) 1770
 - c) 1660
 - d) 1760
 9. Samuel Pepys, a famous diarist from the Restoration period, had which of the following occupations?
 - a) Naval administrator
 - b) Lawyer
 - c) Speech writer
 - d) Merchant
 10. Who was king during the Restoration period?
 - a) James II
 - b) Edward VI
 - c) Charles I
 - d) Charlers II

9.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we discussed the historical background of the restoration period that includes the restoration of Charles II as the king of England. It established the political stability. We also observed the religious conflict between Catholic and Protestant due to the Book of Common Prayer. Samuel Butler's popular *Hudibras* (1663) explains this conflict remarkably. Rise of neo classicism, imitation of ancient masters

and French culture are the major literary characteristics of this period. We witness the development of the restoration tragedy and comedy of manners in this period.

9.8 KEY WORDS

- **Restoration:**

The re-establishment of Charles II as King of England in 1660. After the death of Oliver Cromwell in 1658, his son Richard (1626–1712) proved incapable of maintaining the Protectorate, and General Monck organized the king's return from exile.

- **Test Act:**

The Test Acts were a series of English penal laws that served as a religious test for public office and imposed various civil disabilities on Roman Catholics and nonconformist.

- **The Great Fire of London:**

The Great Fire of London was a major conflagration that swept through the central parts of the English city of London from Sunday, 2nd September to Thursday, 6th September 1666.

9.9 SUGGESTED READING

1. Colley, L. In Defiance of Oligarchy: the Tory Party 1714-60 (Cambridge, 1982)
2. Dickinson, H.T. Liberty and Property: Political Ideology in Eighteenth Century Britain (London, 1977)
3. Harris, T. Politics under the Later Stuarts: Party Conflict in a Divided Society 1660-1715 (London, 1993)
4. Henshall, N. The Myth of Absolutism: Change and Continuity in Early Modern European Monarchy (London, 1992)
5. Holmes, G. British Politics in the Age of Anne (London, 1967)
6. Kenyon, J.P. Revolution Principles: the Politics of Party 1689-1720 (Cambridge, 1977) Kramnick, I. Bolingbroke and His Circle: the Politics of Nostalgia in the Age of Walpole (Ithaca and London, 1992)
7. Bonamy Dobree. English Literature in the Early Eighteenth Century, 1700-1740, (Oxford, 2011)
8. Bonamy Dobree.. Restoration Tragedy (Roman books, 2014)
9. William Henry Hudson. An Outline History of English Literature, (Atlantic, 2008)

**Answers: 1- D ,2 - B ,3- A ,4- D , 5- B , 6- D ,7- A ,8- C ,9 -A ,
10 - D**

UNIT-10**RESTORATION AGE-2 MAJOR WRITERS AND LITERARY WORKS****: STRUCTURE :****10.0 Objectives****10.1 Major Restoration writers and literary works****10.01 John Dryden (1631-1700)****10.0.2 Samuel Butler (1612-1680)****10.0.3 John Bunyan (1632-1704)****10.1.4 Samuel Pepys (1633-1703)****10.1.5 Sir John Locke (1632-1704)****10.1.6 William Congreve (1670-1729)****10.1.7 Sir John Vanbrugh (1664-1726)****10.1.8 George Farquhar (1678-1707)****10.1.9 William Wycherley (1641-1716)****10.1.10 Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727)****10.1.11 Daniel Defoe (1660-1731)****10.2 Let Us Sum Up****10.3 Key Words****10.4 Books Suggested****Answers**

10.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit will make the students know about:

- The major restoration writers and their contribution to the field of English literature.
- How the restoration culture is represented in the major works of restoration writers.
- The development of restoration prose, poetry and drama at the hands of the restoration writers.

10.1 MAJOR RESTORATION WRITERS AND THEIR WORKS

10.1.1 John Dryden (1631-1700)

John Dryden stands as the greatest literary artist in England between 1660 and 1700. In addition to his achievements in drama, he did extremely well in poetry, translation, and literary criticism. He wrote some two hundred original English poems over a period of more than forty years, including the best poetic satires of his age, memorable odes,

and a variety of verse epistles, elegies, religious poems, panegyrics, and lyrics. His prologues and epilogues, attached to his dramas and those of his contemporaries, stand as the highest achievements in English in that minor poetic genre.

He translated two long volumes of prose from French originals—in 1684, Louis Maimbourg's *Histoire de la Ligue* (1684) and, in 1688, Dominique Bouhours's *La Vie de Saint François Xavier* (1683)—and he had a hand in the five-volume translation of Plutarch's *Bioiparalleloi* (c. 105-115; *Parallel Lives*, 1579) published by Jacob Tonson in 1683. The translations were usually well received, especially the editions of Juvenal and Persius (1693) and Vergil (1697).

Dryden's an essay of dramatic poesy was probably written in 1666 during the closure of London theatres due to plague. It was published in 1688, the essay can be seen as a defence of drama as an art form. The essay is structured as a dialogue /debate between four speakers-Eugenius, Crites, Lisideius and Neander. These stand for William Devenant, Robert Howard, Roger Boyle and Dryden respectively. The essay begins with a reference to a naval battle between the British and Dutch.

The above mentioned four speakers observe this battle from a barge floating on Thames. After the battle gets over and the English navy wins, the four speakers begin discussing English drama. Eugenius literally means 'a well-born genius'. He favours the moderns over the ancients, arguing that the moderns have excelled over the ancients because of having learned and profited from their example. The name Crites comes from the Greek word 'critic' or one who is able to express a reasoned judgment on something. He argues in favour of the ancients and applauds the observance of the three unities in drama. He considers Ben Jonson as the greatest English playwrights because he followed the ancients' example by adhering to the unities.

Lisideius' name is probably based on the royal emblem of France, the fleur-de-lis. He argues in favour of the modern day French playwrights. He believes that French drama is superior to English drama because of their adherence to the classical unities. The name Neander literally means 'the new man'. He favours the moderns, but does not disparage the ancients. He critiques 'the barrenness of the French plots' and praises the 'variety and copiousness of the English plays'.

Absalom and Achitophel (1681):

Published in 1681, *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681) is a political satire in heroic couplets. The political background of the poem revolves around the Popish Plot, the Exclusion crisis and the Monmouth rebellion. Dryden adopts a Biblical framework for this political story. The story of Absalom's revolt against King David in the Old Testament is taken as framework to narrate the contemporary political events of the time. David stands for King Charles II, Absalom for James, Duke of Monmouth, Charles II's illegitimate son, Achitophel for Anthony Ashley Cooper, the first Earl of Shaftesbury, who encouraged Monmouth to rebel and Zimiri stands for the second Duke of Buckingham.

The poem satirizes the Whig Party, which sought to prevent the succession of James, Duke of York, to the English throne. Dryden ridicules the Whigs and presents favourable portraits of James' supporters. In the end, the Whigs succeed, and Charles II takes the throne. Dryden turns his wit on the Whigs, a political party that tried to break the traditional line of succession and prevent James, Duke of York, from ascending to the throne.

Mac Flecknoe (1682):

Macflecknoe or A satyr upon the True-Blew-Protestant poet, T.S. is a mock-heroic poem published in 1682. The poem is an attack on Thomas Shadwell, a well-known playwright and an indifferent poet. There were several reasons for enmity between Shadwell and Dryden. Both had different political affiliations-Dryden was a Tory and Shadwell was a Whig. Both had different religious affiliations- Shadwell satirized Catholic and Anglican priests in a play entitled *The Lancashire-Witches* (1649), and *Tegue o Dively the Irish-Priest* (1682) and offended Dryden at a time, when he was considering conversion to Catholicism. Both also had different literary ideals and preferences, while Dryden preferred Shakespeare, Shadwell idolized Jonson. Dryden preferred comedy of wit while Shadwell comedy of humours.

Dryden had criticized Shaftesbury in his satirical poem entitled *The Medal* (1682) provoked Dryden's opponent. Thomas Shadwell wrote the *Medal of John Bayes* (1682) as the answer for the satire. This was followed by the publication of *Mac Flecknoe* (1682) in answer.

10.1.2 Samuel Butler (1612-1680)

Butler's *Hudibras* (1684) is a pointed satire on Puritans. It was influenced by the satires of Rabelais and Cervantes. It has genuine flashes of comic insight. It is a great piece of satirical poetry and it stands next to Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681). Butler is a remarkable figure in the poetic development of the Restoration period.

Hudibras (1684) is a travesty, or a burlesque. It takes a serious subject, humiliates it by using a low style, and distorts it by grotesque exaggeration. Butler carried this mode into his verse also. He reduced the iambic tetrameter line to something approaching doggerel, and his boldly comic rhymes add to the effect of broad comedy that he sought to create. Burlesque was a popular form of satire during the seventeenth century, especially after the French poet Paul Scarron published his *Virgile Travesti* (1648), which retells the *Aeneid* in slang. Butler's use of burlesque expresses his contempt for the Puritans and their commonwealth; the history of England from 1642 to 1660 is made to appear mere sound and fury.

Butler took his hero's name from Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (1590), where Sir Huddibras appears briefly as a rash adventurer and lover. The questing knight of chivalric romance is degraded into the meddling, hypocritical *Hudibras*, who goes out, like an officer in Cromwell's army, against the popular sport of bear baiting. The knight and his squire,

Balph, suggest Don Quixote and Sanch Panza, but the temper of Butler's mind is as remote from Cervantes's warm humanity as it is from Spenser's ardent idealism. Butler had no illusions; he was sceptical in philosophy and conservative in politics, distrusting theoretical reasoning and the new science, disdainful of claims of inspiration and illumination, contemptuous of Catholicism and dubious of bishops, Anglican no less than Boman. It is difficult to think of anything that he approved unless it was peace, common sense, and the wisdom that emerges from the experience of humankind through the ages.

10.1.3 John Bunyan (1632-1704)

Bunyan wrote two prose allegories, *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) and *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman*. Bunyan (1680). He is called the pioneer of English novel. *The Pilgrim's Progress* is remarkable for impressive characters, presentation of contemporary life and dramatic interest. Bunyan's style is simple, clear, lucid, Biblical and colloquial.

John Bunyan is one of the most remarkable figures in seventeenth-century literature. The son of a poor Bedfordshire tinker, he received only meagre schooling and then learned his father's craft. Nothing in the circumstances of his early life could have suggested that he would become a writer known the world over. *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666), his spiritual autobiography, records his transformation from a self-doubting sinner into an eloquent and fearless Baptist preacher. Preachers, both male and female, often even less educated than Bunyan, were common phenomena among the sects during the Commonwealth. They wished no ordination but the "call," and they could dispense with learning because they abounded in inspiration, inner light, and the gifts conferred by the Holy Spirit. In November 1660, the Anglican Church began to persecute and silence the dissenting sects. Prisons filled with unlicensed Nonconformist preachers, and Bunyan was one of the prisoners. Refusing to keep silent, he chose imprisonment and so for twelve years remained in Bedford jail, preaching to his fellow prisoners and writing religious books. Upon his release, he was called to the pastorate of a Nonconformist group in Bedford. It was during a second imprisonment, in 1675, when the Test Act was once again rigorously enforced against Nonconformists that he wrote his greatest work, *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

The Pilgrim's Progress is the most popular allegory in English. Its basic metaphor—life is a journey—is simple and familiar; the objects that the pilgrim Christian meets are homely and commonplace: a quagmire, the highway, the bypaths and shortcuts through pleasant meadows, the inn, the steep hill, the town fair on market day, and the river that must be forded.

10.1.4 Samuel Pepys (1633-1703)

Samuel Pepys (pronounced "Peeps") was the son of a London tailor. With the help of a scholarship, he took a degree at Cambridge; with the help of a cousin, he found place in the Navy Office. His defence of

the Navy Office and himself before Parliament in 1668 won him a reputation as a good administrator, and his career continued to prosper until it was broken, first by false accusations of treason in 1679 and finally by the fall of James II in 1688. But Pepys was more than a bureaucrat. A Londoner to his core, he was interested in all the activities of the city: the theatre, music, the social whirl, business, religion, literary life, and the scientific experiments of the Royal Society (which he served as president from 1684 to 1686). He also found plenty of chances to indulge his two obsessions: chasing after women and making money.

Pepys kept his diary from 1660 to 1669. Writing in shorthand and sometimes in code, he was completely frank in recording the events of his day, both public and private, the major affairs of state or his quarrels with his wife. Altogether, he wrote about 1.3 million words. When the diary was first deciphered and published in the nineteenth century, it made him newly famous. As a document of social history, it is unsurpassed for its rich detail, honesty, and immediacy.

10.1.5 Sir John Locke (1632-1704)

Laurence Sterne in *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy Gent.* In Three Volumes John (1779) mentions, that Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) is "a history-book". Like Montaigne's essays, it aims to explore the human mind in general by closely watching one particular mind. When Locke analyzed his ideas, the ways they were acquired and put together, he found they were clear when they were based on direct experience and adequate when they were clear. Usually, it appeared, problems occurred when basic ideas were blurred or confused or did not refer to anything determinate. Thus, a critical analysis of the ideas in an individual mind could lead straight to a rule about adequate ideas in general and the sort of subject where adequate ideas were possible. On the basis of such a limitation, individuals might reach rational agreement with one another and so set up an area of natural law, within which a common rule of understanding was available.

Locke's new "way of ideas" strikes a humble, antidogmatic note, but readers quickly perceived its far-reaching implications. By basing knowledge on the ideas immediately "before the mind", His approach also alarmed some divines who argued that the foundation of human life could never be reduced to clear, distinct ideas. Locke the Christian scriptures in *The Essay* (1982) in the midst of his famous critique of "enthusiasm," the belief in private revelation, but his main impulse is to restrain rather than to encourage religious speculations. The *Essay* also contains an unsettling discussion of personal identity Locke argues that a person's sense of selfhood derives not from the "identity of soul" but rather from "consciousness of present and past actions"

10.1.6 William Congreve (1670-1729)

William Congreve's parents came from prominent county families. His father, a younger son, obtained a commission as lieutenant in the army and moved to Ireland in 1674. There our future playwright was

educated at Kilkenny School and Trinity College, Dublin; at both places, he was a younger contemporary of Swift. In 1691, he took rooms in the Middle Temple and began to study law, but soon found he preferred the wit of the coffee houses and the theatre. Within a year, he had so distinguished himself at Will's Coffee house that he had become intimate with the great Dryden himself, and his brief career as a dramatist began shortly thereafter.

The success of *The Old Bachelor* (1693) immediately established him as the most promising young dramatist in London. Dryden declared it the best first play he had ever read. *The Double Dealer* (1693) was a near failure, though it evoked one of Dryden's most graceful and gracious poems, in which he praised Congreve as the superior of Jonson and Fletcher and the equal of Shakespeare. *Love for Love* (1695) was an unqualified success and remains Congreve's most frequently revived play. In 1697 he brought out a well-received tragedy, *The Mourning Bride*. Congreve's most elegant comedy of manners, *The Way of the World*, received a brilliant production in 1700. The dialogue is epigrammatic and brilliant, the plot is an intricate puzzle, and the characters shine with surprisingly complex facets. During the rest of his life, he wrote no more plays. Instead, he held a minor government post, which, although a Whig, he was allowed to keep during the Tory ministry of Oxford and Bolingbroke; after the accession of George I, he was given a more lucrative government sinecure. Despite the political animosities of the first two decades of the century, he managed to remain on friendly terms with Swift and Pope, and Pope dedicated to him his translation of the *Iliad*.

10.1.7 Sir John Vanbrugh (1664-1726)

He was born about 1666, and had a varied career, being in turn soldier, herald and architect. His first play, *The Relapse*, was performed in 1697. This was followed in the next year by *The Provoked Wife* (1697), while the *Confederacy* was not produced until 1735. With the exception of these three plays, there are no writings of any note to his credit. In character, he was forceful, energetic, and rugged. He was knighted in 1734 and died twelve years later. In Vanbrugh's first two plays, we have all the familiar puppets of Restoration comedy, the fops and the fools being treated with more naturalness if less wit than by Congreve, and with far less coarseness. Most important point to all perhaps, to the modern reader, his plays show a fresher handling of the life of the day than we find usually in the Restoration drama, and the eighteenth century novelists are certainly indebted to him in their characteristics.

10.1.8 George Farquhar (1678-1707)

He was born at Londonderry in 1678. Like Congreve, he went to Trinity College, Dublin and afterwards joined the army. In personality he is the most volatile and inconsequential of the three later dramatists, as is shown in amorous intrigue or military adventure, loving the good things

of life yet meting misfortunate with an excellent front. He died in 1707. He is noted for his contributions to late Restoration comedy, particularly for his plays *The Recruiting officer* (1706) and *The Beaux' Stratagem* (1707).

10.1.9 William Wycherley (1641-1716)

The Country Wife (1675) by William Wycherley is the other play, after *The Way of the World* (1700), most commonly set for Advanced level. Its central character, Horner, pretends to be sexually incapable, as a device whereby he may lull husbands into a sense of false security and seduce their wives. He finds little difficulty in overwhelming the 'honour' that is so marked a feature of Restoration comedy; it did not stop a woman sleeping with a man, but it did make both partners paranoid about that fact becoming known. Horner's part in the play is central. He avoids condemnation or punishment, and can thus be seen to render the play wholly immoral. A major factor on the other side of the argument is that Horner is not really a character at all, but more of a satiric exposure of other people's vice. In other words his importance in the play is not as a personality, but as a means whereby the author can reveal the features of other people.

It is also true that hypocrisy is condemned severely in the play, and that the vast majority of characters who suffer in it thoroughly deserve to do so. There is a tendency to ask about characterization, with a quotation or leading statement to the effect that Wycherley's good characters are dull, and his bad ones full of life, but also corrupt beyond the level of normality.

10.1.10 Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727)

Isaac Newton was the son of a Lincolnshire farmer. As a boy, he invented machines; as an undergraduate, he made major discoveries in optics and mathematics; and in 1667 he was elected a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. Two years later, his teacher, Isaac Barrow, resigned the Lucasian Chair of Mathematics in his favour. By then, in secret, Newton had already begun to re think the universe. His mind worked incessantly, at the highest level of insight, both theoretical and experimental. He designed the first reflecting telescope and explained why the sky looks blue; he invented calculus; he revolutionized the study of mechanics and physics with three basic laws of motion; and as everyone knows, he discovered the universal law of gravity. Although Newton's *Principia* (*Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, 1687) made possible the modern understanding of the cosmos, his *Opticks* (1704) had a still greater impact on his contemporaries, not only for its discoveries about light and color but also for its formulation of a proper scientific method.

Newton reported most of his scientific findings in Latin, the language of international scholarship; but when he chose, he could express himself in crisp and vigorous English.

10.1.11 Daniel Defoe (1660-1731)

By birth, education, and occupations Daniel Defoe was a stranger to the sphere of refined tastes and classical learning that dominated polite literature during his lifetime. Middle class in his birth, Presbyterian in his religion, he belonged among the hardy Nonconformist trades folk who, after the Restoration, slowly increased their wealth and toward the end of the seventeenth century began to achieve political importance.

He began adult life as a small merchant and for a while prospered, and in 1692, he found himself bankrupt, with debts amounting to £17,000. This was the first of his many financial crises, crises that drove him to make his way, like his own heroes and heroines, by whatever means presented themselves. However double his dealings; he seems always to have found the way to reconcile them with his genuine Nonconformist piety. His restless mind was fertile in "projects," both for himself and for the country, and his desire for politics made the role of passive observer impossible for him. An ardent Whig, he first gained notoriety by political verses and pamphlets, and for one of them, *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters* (1702), in which he ironically defended Anglican oppression, he stood in the pillory three times and was sentenced to jail. He was released through the influence of Robert Harley (later earl of Oxford), who recognized in Defoe, as he was to do in Swift, a useful ally. For the next eleven years Defoe served his benefactor secretly as a political spy and confidential agent, travelling throughout England and Scotland, reporting and perhaps influencing opinion. As founder and editor of the *Review*, he endeavoured to gain support for Harley's policies, even when, in 1710, Harley became head of a Tory ministry. It is characteristic of Defoe that, after the fall of the Tories in 1714, he went over to the triumphant Whigs and served them as loyally as he had their enemy.

When he was nearly sixty, Defoe's energy and inventiveness enabled him to break new ground, indeed to begin a new career. *Robinson Crusoe*, which appeared in 1719, is the first of a series of tales of adventure for which Defoe is now admired, but which brought him little esteem from the polite world, however much they gratified the less cultivated readers in the City or the servants' hall. In *Robinson Crusoe* and other tales that followed, Defoe was able to use all his greatest gifts: the ability to re-create an environment vividly, a special skill in writing easygoing prose and the language of actual speech. In the fictitious autobiographies of adventurers or rogues—*Captain Singleton* (1720), *Moll Flanders* (1722), *Colonel Jack* (1722), and *Roxana* (1724)—Defoe spoke for and to the members of his own class. Like them, he was engrossed by property and success, and his way of writing made, all he touched seem true.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1

Answer The Following Questions.

1. John Dryden is considered to be the most important figure in Restoration literature. Why do you think he was so influential?

2. Amongst many other things, Daniel Defoe wrote about the Black Death in London in his historical fiction "A Journal of the Plague Year". What was the author's main interest in doing so?

3. Discuss the contribution of Samuel Pepys in the restoration literature.
4. Write a critical note on the Restoration Comedy of Manner with reference to the works of William Congreve.

5. Write short notes on:
(a) Absalom and Achitophel as a political satire
(b) Hudibras and religious sectarianism

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2

CHOOSE THE APPROPRIATE OPTION

1. In which type of writing Restoration writers are often engaged?
 - a) Satirical
 - b) Tragic
 - c) Hyperbolic
 - d) Lyric
2. Which of these is one of the major themes of Restoration literature?
 - a) Childhood
 - b) Nature
 - c) Social Life
 - d) Solitude
3. What did comedies of Manners often focus on?
 - a) Sexual deceit
 - b) Fidelity
 - c) Happiness
 - d) Punishment
4. Which literature influenced Restoration writers?
 - a) German literature
 - b) Italian literature
 - c) Greek literature

- d) French literature
- 5. Who wrote *Mac Flecknoe*?
 - a) William Wycherley
 - b) John Donne
 - c) John Dryden
 - d) William Congreve
- 6. Who among the following did NOT write during the Restoration period?
 - a) John Milton
 - b) Thomas Otway
 - c) Sir Walter Scott
 - d) John Dryden
- 7. Which poet, critic and translator brought England a modern literature between 1660 and 1700?
 - a) Addison
 - b) Bunyan
 - c) Crabbe
 - d) Dryden
- 8. Which of the following is not an example of Restoration comedy?
 - a) Etherege's *The Man of Mode*
 - b) Wycherley's *The Country Wife*
 - c) Behn's *The Rover*
 - d) Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
- 9. When was John Dryden born?
 - a) 2 February 1641
 - b) 15 May 1636
 - c) 19 August 1631
 - d) 15 December 1628
- 10. 'Lady Wishfort' is a character in:
 - a) *The Country Wife*
 - b) *The Provoked Wife*
 - c) *The Way of the world*
 - d) *All For Love*

10. 2 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we studied the important writers of the restoration period. John Dryden established himself as the leading poet and literary critic of his day. Other important writers that we studied are Samuel Butler, John Bunyan, Samuel Pepys, Sir John Locke William Congreve and Daniel Defoe. We also witnessed the development of various literary genres including the restoration comedy of manners in the major works of William Congreve.

10.3 KEY WORDS

- **Political satire:**

Political satire is satire that specializes in gaining entertainment from politics; it has also been used with subversive intent where political speech and dissent are forbidden by a regime, as a method of advancing political arguments where such arguments are expressly forbidden.

- **Heroic couplet:**

A heroic couplet is a traditional form for English poetry, commonly used in epic and narrative poetry, and consisting of a rhyming pair of lines in iambic pentameter.

- **Comedy of Manners:**

The comedy of Manners is a form of comedy that satirizes the manners and affectations of contemporary society and questions societal standards

10.4 BOOKS SUGGESTED

1. Daniel Defoe, *The Complete English Gentleman*, ed. K.D. Bulbring (London, 1890)
2. Daniel Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman* (Gloucester, 1987).
3. John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* eds J.W and J.S. Yolton,(Oxford, 1989)
4. G.W. Leibnitz, *New Essays on Human Understanding* trans. P Remnant and J. Bennett (Cambridge, 1982)
- 5 John Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, 2 vols, ed. J.W Yolton (London, 1965),
6. Bonamy Dobree. *English Literature in the Early Eighteenth Century, 1700-1740* , (Oxford, 2011)
7. Bonamy Dobree.. *Restoration Tragedy* (Roman books, 2014)
8. William Henry Hudson. *An Outline History of English Literature*, (Atlantic, 2008)

ANSWERS

1- A ,2 - C ,3- A ,4- D , 5- C , 6- C ,7- D ,8- D ,9 -A ,10 - C

Unit-11**AUGUSTAN AGE-1 HISTORICAL
BACKGROUND AND CHARACTERISTICS****: STRUCTURE :****11.0 Objectives****11.1 Introduction****11.2 Historical Background****11.3 Social Development****11.4 Literary Features****11.5 Major Genres****11.6 Let Us Sum Up****11.7 Key Words****11.8 Books suggested****Answers**

11.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit will help you:

- Understand the period of the Augustan Age in English Literature
- Know the chief characteristics of the Age

After you finish this unit, you will be able to:

- Distinguish this Age from the previous Age
- Describe the specific features of the Age
- Appreciate the works of the Age

11.1 INTRODUCTION

The Augustan Age in English Literature is also called the Age of Queen Anne, the Neo-Classical Age, the Age of Pope as well as the 18th century. Each of these names looks at the literature of the age from a different perspective: from the ancient Age when Augustus Caesar ruled and was an Age of creative flowering, the period in which Queen Anne (a very weak queen) ruled England, the Age which considered itself to be as great as the Classical Age, the age in which an important writer was Pope, and in terms of dates was indeed the 18th century. (Caesar Augustus was one of ancient Rome's most successful leaders who led the transformation of Rome from a republic to an empire. During his reign, Augustus restored peace and prosperity to the Roman state and changed nearly every aspect of Roman life.) The Classical Age (500-336 BC) refers to the Classical Period of ancient Greece and was a time when the Greeks achieved new heights in art, architecture, theatre, and philosophy. In using the term Neo-Classical to refer to this period, we believe that it is used in a slightly derogatory sense as if the period pretended to be what it

actually was not. Different critics and literary historians seem to prefer one of these above the others. The period, however, can be the entire century (1700—1800), as it is often referred to as the 18th century. And yet, from a historical perspective it is the period after the Revolution of 1688 when major political and social developments took place and which get reflected in the literature of the Age. It is imperative to understand these developments to be able to appreciate the literature of this Age. The invention of the printing press leading to the birth of the newspaper is an important landmark in the literary development of the Age. This Age also saw the birth of the novel and the Periodical Essay as literary genres. The absence of drama also merits mention.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I

1. STATE WHETHER TRUE OR FALSE

- a) The Augustan Age preceded the Restoration Age.
- b) Queen Elizabeth was a more powerful ruler than Queen Anne.
- c) Drama flourished in this period.
- d) Newspapers became possible due to the invention of the printing press.

2. FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH APPROPRIATE WORDS OR PHRASES

- a) The Revolution of 1688 is also referred to as the _____.
- b) Augustus was a _____ ruler.
- c) The Classical Age refers to the flourishing of arts in ancient _____.
- d) We refer to this Age as Age of _____ because of an important poet of the period.

11.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The 18th century in England opens with the war of Spanish succession. As Marlborough was a great military genius, the British gained two ports, two colonies and a valuable trade concession the sole right of shipping slaves to the Spanish colonies. In 1707, the Act of Union was passed uniting England and Scotland to form Great Britain.

Queen Anne died in 1714 and George I of Hanover ascended the throne. The Jacobites were bitterly disappointed and there was a rebellion in 1715, followed by another in 1745 to restore the Stuarts. All through the reigns of George I and II, the Whigs had a monopoly and it was only under George III that the Tories came into power. Sir Robert Walpole, the first Prime Minister of England, was an important statesman during this period.

George III succeeded his grandfather in 1760. Having been taught to be a king in reality, he took into his own hands the patronage of the state and church. He began distributing 'royal favours' himself, thus filling the House of Commons with mercenaries, often referred to as 'the King's friends'. As he ruled for twenty years as an autocrat, there was considerable tension and strife between the ruler and the ruled. He succeeded also in flattening almost all the Whig opposition, but this

coincided with England's dispute with her American colonies. The War of American Independence, which lasted for seven years, also brought with it the end of the King's personal rule and the restoration of parliamentary democracy.

Pitt, the Younger, was Prime Minister for 19 years (1783-1801 and 1804-1806). It was during this period that other important events took place like the French Revolution (1789), the union of Ireland with Great Britain to form the United Kingdom, the rise of Napoleon and his later exile as well as the restoration of the French monarchy.

Outside the borders of England, Clive in India, Wolfe on the plains of Abraham, Cook in Australia and the islands of the Pacific were spreading the world-wide Empire of the British.

It is in this historical backdrop that you have to look at the society of that time.'

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS II

1. MATCH THE WORDS IN A WITH APPROPRIATE PHRASES IN B

A	B
i) French Revolution	a) 1714
ii) Clive	b) Great military genius
iii) Death of Queen Anne	c) India
iv) Marlborough	d) First Prime Minister
v) Walpole	e) 1789

2. STATE WHETHER TRUE OR FALSE

- a) Pitt was Prime Minister of England during the French Revolution.
- b) George III filled the House of Commons with mercenaries.
- c) Marlborough was a great politician.
- d) The American War of Independence lasted for 7 years.
- e) The Jacobites were disappointed because the House of Hanover was in power.

11.3 SOCIETY IN THE AUGUSTAN AGE

The society that gave the 18th century England her tone and character was aristocratic. Political power seemed to be concentrated in the nobility. Bribing the voter was considered normal, during elections. Both in the academic world and in the army, everything was available for a price. The aristocracy gambled, drank deep and enjoyed their life to the hilt. They travelled to the cities of Europe and returned loaded with art-treasures to embellish their magnificent houses. It almost seemed as if their culture was artificial.

England was fighting France throughout the century but their literature and art seemed to be influenced by France and Italy too. French influence on English literature was a combination of both good and bad. Because of the general political stability following the Revolution, the eighteenth century in England was an era of peace and prosperity. Englishmen seemed to settle down to the business of peaceful and

civilised living. The streets of London continued to be unsafe, but rioting, way-laying, robbing and other forms of barbarism seemed to decline as the century progressed. The privileged class attained a high level of education and culture. And now, it was the nobility rather than the crown which patronised art and letters.

In this century can be noticed that the people of England learned the art of living together even when their opinions differed. In a single generation nearly two thousand public coffee houses, each a centre of social intercourse, sprang up in London alone. In addition to this, there were a number of private clubs too. This new social life contributed in great measure to the polishing of men's words and manners. In spite of a certain vulgarity still existing in some Londoners, men sought to refine their manners according to prevailing standards and to be elegant. Some point out that this was a kind of superficial elegance. Though there still continued the opposing Whig and Tory parties as well as the divisions in the Church, the growing social life presented an outward impression of peace and unity. The general tendency of the age was one of toleration and this was helped in great measure by the spread of education. The rule of reason and common-sense had done its work of enlightening and humanising the eighteenth century. This is demonstrated best in the civilising influence of the century in the agitation against the slave-trade and its final abolition early in the next century.

Simultaneously, schools were established, books and magazines multiplied until the press became the greatest visible power in England. Religiously, all the churches of England felt the tremendous spiritual revival known as Methodism.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS III

a) FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH APPROPRIATE WORDS/ PHRASES

- i) The spiritual revival in the churches of England was known as _____.
- ii) The slave trade was abolished in the _____ century.
- iii) The two major political parties in the century were _____ and _____.
- iv) The culture of this period seemed _____.
- v) The _____, not the crown, patronised the arts in this century.

b) ANSWER IN ONE SENTENCE:

- i) Why did books and magazines multiply in the 18th century?
- ii) What led to the spread of toleration?
- iii) What was available at a price? Why?
- iv) What did the new social life contribute to?
- v) What were the new centres of social intercourse?

11.4 LITERARY CHARACTERISTICS

Every Age in literature shows the preponderance of one genre over the others. The Augustan Age was undoubtedly the Age of prose.

Several social factors were responsible for this and the spread of education and the advent of periodicals contributed in great measure towards this. A multitude of practical interests arising from the new social and political conditions demanded expression not merely in books, but more specially in pamphlets, magazines and newspapers. Poetry seemed inadequate for the task and hence we see the development of prose at an unprecedented pace. As Long points out: The graceful elegance of Addison's essays, the terse vigour of Swift's satire, the artistic finish of Fielding's novels, the sonorous eloquence of Gibbon's history and of Burke's orations --- these have no parallel in the poetry of the age. One of the chief glories of this age is the variety and excellence of prose works and the development of a serviceable prose style.

Some characteristics of the previous age, like the tendency to realism in subject-matter and the tendency to polish and refinement of expression, continued in the Augustan Age and can be seen both in the poetry of Pope and the prose of Addison. A third tendency that is seen in this Age is the prevalence of satire, which was the result of the unfortunate union of politics and literature. The perpetual strife of the political parties led to every writer in the first half of the century being used or rewarded by either the Whigs or Tories. This was done for either satirizing their enemies or advancing their special political interests. Satire may have various purposes but the most common one here is where a literary work searches out the faults of an individual or an institution to hold them up to ridicule. Many critics consider this a very negative kind of criticism. It may be argued that the satires of Pope, Swift and Addison are the best in the English language, the fact remains that they are never placed along with the best of English literature.

The term 'classicism' is often used to refer to the literature of the Augustan Age. One of the reasons that the word was used was because of the unusual number of great works produced in this period. The word 'classic' itself took on many meanings. In this age, the general tendency of writers was to look at life critically, to emphasize intellect rather than imagination, the form rather than the content. Writers strove to repress all emotion and enthusiasm and to use only precise and elegant methods of expression. Generally, this is what is meant by the 'classicism' of this age. It refers to the critical, intellectual spirit of many writers, to the fine polish of their heroic couplets or the elegance of their prose. This should not be considered or interpreted as having any resemblance to true classic literature. We could even say that this was a 'pseudo-classic' period--- a period of false and sham classicism.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS IV

1.GIVE REASONS:

- i) The Age is referred to as the Age of Classicism.
- ii) Satire was prevalent in this century.
- iii) There was a preponderance of prose in this Age.

2.FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH APPROPRIATE WORDS/ PHRASES

- i) It is called a _____ period as it was a period of false and sham classicism.
- ii) One of the important aims of _____ is to hold up something to ridicule.
- iii) The Augustan Age was undoubtedly the Age of _____.

11.5 GENRES

Prose:

The whole of the 18th century is hailed as the Age of Prose and this is noticeable from the beginning of the century. The age saw the establishment of the periodical essay and the beginnings of prose fiction. Another predominant and remarkable feature of this period is the predominance of political satire, which reached its glorious height. The prose style of this period was used for a variety of purposes: narration, description, exposition, speculation, argument. The age also witnessed writers who could use the plain style to expound their political, philosophical or theological doctrines.

Poetry:

In many ways, this Age was a continuation of the previous age and this is clearly seen in the poetry of the Age. Simultaneously is noticeable in the poetry of this Age, an unconscious revolt from the classical ideal. Romance seemed to be on the way and some of the poets of the Age became the precursors or heralds of the Romantic Movement of the 19th century.

Novel:

Though the ancestry of the novel may be traced to the Elizabethan Age as well as to the character writers of the 17th century, the novel as we know it today was created and established in the middle of the 18th century. The novel was then seen as a 'long tale portraying characters and incidents from real life'.

Essay:

In addition to the novel, the Essay was a great gift of the century. With the invention of the printing, the spread of education and the resultant increase in readership, the essay, and in particular the periodical essay, flourished. Many of the essayists also were professional men of letters and hence excelled in other forms of literature too. Towards the end of the century, modern magazines and reviews became popular.

Letter-writing:

An unhurried age of peace and leisure provides the ideal atmosphere for letter writing as an art and this is proved by the bulk and quality of the letters of this century. 'The Peace of the Augustans', as it is

often referred to, contributed to aristocratic ladies and gentlemen filling their leisure hours with writing for amusement. In addition to writing satirical verses, squibs and essays for periodicals, they found writing long letters an additional pastime.

Drama:

The Age witnessed the decline of drama but not of dramatic activity. Historians continue to be puzzled by the decline of drama in the 18th century and its continued eclipse till the end of the 19th century. Only two dramatists, succeeded in redeeming the drama of this age. Most talented writers chose the novel as their medium because it offered them a huger canvas and did not hamper their style as stage conventions did in drama. However, this century did produce actors and actresses who are better known than the dramatists of the Age.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS V

1. FILL THE BLANKS WITH APPROPRIATE WORDS/PHRASES

- i) The genre least written in this age was_____.
- ii) _____ was popular because of the unhurried pace of life.
- iii) Modern magazines became popular towards the _____.
- iv) _____ reached its glorious height in this century.

11.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you have learnt:

- The historical events of the Age
- The major changes in society
- Their effects on the literature of the Age
- The genres that were popular

11.7 KEY WORDS

- **Coffee-houses:** A new active culture evolved in 18th century England where coffee houses sprang up all over London; they attracted a variety of patrons and became the hub of news and the place where new ideas were formed
- **Letter-writing:** A popular activity in the 18th century where relaxed social life made this a favourite pastime and reflected the social aspirations of the Age
- **Periodicals:** The invention of the printing press, increase in middle-class and spread of education led to publication of periodicals which were generally four pages and dealt with social issues of the day
- **Political satire:** A satire which specialises in gaining entertainment from politics; used in the 18th century by both political parties to condemn and reward

11.8 BOOKS SUGGESTED

1. A Compendious History of English Literature by R.D.Trivedi

2. English Literature by W. J. Long
3. A History of English Literature by Edward Albert

ANSWERS

Check your progress I

1. A) False B) True C) False D) True
2. A) Restoration B) Roman C) Greece D) Pope

Check your progress II

1. i-e, ii-c, iii-a, iv-b, v-d
2. a) True b) True c) False d) True e) True

Check your progress III

1. i) Methodism ii) 19th century iii) Whigs and Tories iv) artificial v) nobility
2. i) Invention of the printing press
ii) Spread of education
iii) Bribery in army, education etc
iv) Polishing of men's words and manners
v) Coffee houses and clubs

Check your progress IV

1. i) Unusual number of great works produced in this period
ii) Used by both political parties to reward and ridicule
iii) Poetry seemed inadequate
2. i) pseudo-classic
ii) satire
iii) prose

Check your progress v

1. i) drama
ii) letter-writing
iii) end of the century
iv) political satire

UNIT-12**AUGUSTAN AGE-2 MAJOR WRITERS AND LITERARY WORKS****: STRUCTURE :****12.0 Objectives****12.1 Introduction****12.2 Poets****12.3 Essayists****12.4 Novelists****12.5 Historians****12.6 Let Us Sum Up****12.7 Key Words****12.8 Books suggested****Answers**

12.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit will help you

- Know the major writers of the Augustan Age
- Relate specific works to the writers
- Appreciate the features of the literature of the Age

After studying this unit, you will be able to

- Identify the writers of the Augustan Age
- Analyse the various genres popular in the Age
- Describe the characteristics of the literature of the Age

12.1 INTRODUCTION

The Augustan Age is an important Age in English Literature. There was a spurt in the number of writers and many genres were popular. It has been called the Age of Prose because of the writers at the beginning of the Age. Prose writings of this Age made progress in narration, description, exposition, speculation, argument etc. Alongside, the Age witnessed the establishment of the Periodical Essay made possible and popular due to the invention of the printing press. Political satire also reached new heights. In poetry, writers moved towards a strict following of rules, of rhyme and metre, of placing the 'how' above the 'what', of manner over matter. Though there had been attempts at prose fiction as early as the Elizabethan Age, the actual development of the novel as a literary genre took place in this Age. This genre continues to this day in almost the same form. This Age was also a great Age for letter-writing. As letter-writing is an art that can be cultivated only in an unhurried age of ease and leisure, this Age seemed to be ideal for this purpose. The letters of this century both by their bulk and by quality

constitute an important stock of literature. The drama of this Age has nothing to commend itself and was indeed a dull and dreary affair. Drama declined but dramatic activity continued. This Age produced actors and actresses who seem to be better known than the dramatists themselves. Noticeable in the drama of this period is the French influence.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS I

A. STATE WHETHER TRUE OR FALSE

- i) Prose fiction began as early as the Elizabethan Age.
- ii) Political satire was absent in this Age.
- iii) Writers placed 'what' above 'how'.
- iv) It has rightly been called the Age of drama.
- v) The Age produced good actors and actresses.

12.2 POETS

The Poetry of the 18th century was as different from the previous age as the poetry of the Romantic Age would be. The secession from romanticism seems complete and the ideals of classicism begin to reign supreme. In no genre is the triumph of classicism seen more fully than in poetry. The lyric almost disappears and whatever little of it remains is of a light and artificial nature and a pale reflection of the Caroline species. The ode still survives in the Pindaric form. The satiric type of poetry is seen in great measure and is of high quality. It is not however of the standard of Dryden. Satire tends to be lighter, brighter but more cynical. In addition to the heroic couplet, the octo-syllabic couplet was becoming popular. Another development in satire was the epistolary form of the satire. Narrative poetry is of considerable bulk in this age and contains some of the best productions of the period. There is visible a slight revival of the ballad and some poor imitations of earlier ballads. The artificial type of the pastoral was highly popular. Some reasons for this may be the air of rusticity it gave to many compositions, it was considered to be elegant, it was easily written, and it had the appeal of the ancients.

Alexander Pope (1688-1744): The most important poet of this Age was undoubtedly Alexander Pope. As a poet, he was deeply affected by the experiences of his life which included his physical weaknesses, his character which seemed a mass of contradictions, the mental agony caused by the taunts and sneers of his enemies, the rivalry for poetic fame, an animosity which was intensely personal and vindictive and which gave to his satirical portraits a vigour and incisiveness which have indeed made them immortal.

Pope's works may be divided into two groups—earlier and later. In the earlier group, we have his '*Pastorals*', *Essay on Criticism*, *The Rape of the Lock* and his translations of Homer while the later consists of the *Dunciad* and the *Satires* and the *Epistles*.

The Pastorals were published in 1709 and of these Pope claims: "I lisped in numbers/ And the numbers came". Based on classical models, the characters and scenery seem to lack vigour and reality. However, the work is important as an experiment in verse technique. His medium was the heroic couplet and he handles it with great metrical skill, variation of

speed and tone as well as delicacy of touch. The rich description is loaded with epithet and the diction often artificial.

Pope's first major literary venture, *The Essay on Criticism*, was published in 1711. It sums up the art of poetry according to Horace and filtered through Boileau—the French poet-critic. Pope's mastery of terse expression has indeed made it a store-house of pithy maxims. Some of these have indeed become a part of everyday speech. For example, "A little learning is a dangerous thing", "To err is human, to forgive divine" etc.

The Rape of the Lock, published in 1714, is a mock-heroic poem, which satirises the fashionable society of the 18th century. Supposedly written to patch up a serious quarrel which arose between two aristocratic families when Lord Petre cut off a lock of hair from a beautiful maid Arabella Fermor. It is around this story that Pope is able to weave an entire poem in the epic tradition. He succeeds in satirising with a most delicate and lively fancy the fashions and foibles of polite society. He introduces sylphs and gnomes instead of gods and goddesses and the poem is certainly one of the most perfect mock-epics in the English language.

His shorter poems of the period like *Eloisa to Abelard* and *Elegy to an Unfortunate Lady* are interesting because they are the only poems where Pope wrote directly on the theme of love. They can be considered as expressions of passion and pathos.

Pope's translation of Homer received a mixed response. Though many of his contemporaries were happy to read a contemporary translation, it is considered faulty as a translation as Pope had no sound knowledge of Greek and may have been led into errors by his reference to earlier translations. At the same time, it is a brilliant poem, which is fast-moving and full of eloquent speeches even when far removed from the vigour of the original. It can be said that Pope had only one dress to clothe all subjects--- 'the highly artificial dress of the mechanised couplet and sophisticated wit'.

The Dunciad was a response to Theobald's criticism of Pope's edition of Shakespeare. *The Dunciad* was a war of wit against dullness. Infuriated by the criticism against him, Pope first made Theobald the hero of *Dunciad* but in the later edition substituted him with Cibber who had been appointed the poet-laureate. The satire is undoubtedly brilliant in its scorching abuse but critics have pointed out that Pope need not have wasted his poetic talent for the gratification of personal spite. Though inspired by Dryden's *MacFlecknoe*, Pope's *Dunciad* is generally considered to be inferior to the former.

The Satires and *Epistles* were the last important works of Pope and were written in imitation of Horace. Partly satirical and partly didactic, the two most famous ones are *Essay on Man* and *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*. The *Essay on Man* is probably the most quoted of Pope's poems and consists of four epistles. According to Pope, the purpose of this poem was 'to vindicate the ways of God to Man'. Most critics believe

that except in form it is not poetry. It is found to consist of numerous literary ornaments without any very solid structure of thought.

Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot was the prologue to the satires and is considered one of Pope's most brilliant satires mixed with autobiography. It contains the famous satirical portrait of Addison in the character of Atticus.

In summing up Pope as a poet, it is clear that he remained unchallenged as the greatest till 1798. However, both in subject and style, his poems are limited, but his work is indeed powerful and effective. A study of his technique shows his meticulous attention to the right word at the right place. We see 'correctness and finish' in his use of the heroic couplet. As a verse satirist, he certainly is as immortal as Dryden. 'The house of poetry has many mansions and one is certainly reserved for Pope'.

Worthy of mention in this Age is Robert Burns (1759-96), the Scottish poet, and William Blake (1757-1827) whose *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* reveal a variety of spontaneity and lyrical quality.

Other poets of the Age who deserve a mention are Mathew Prior, John Gay, Edward Young, Thomas Parnell etc.

Oliver Goldsmith (1728—1774) wrote his poems within the framework of the classical school and also succeeded in infusing his poetry with nature, feeling and humour. His best known works are *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village*.

Dr. Johnson (1709-84) was the greatest literary figure of the third quarter of the century and his major achievements were in prose. However, he wrote two satires in imitation of Juvenal. Both *London* and *The Vanity of Human Wishes* were written strictly in accordance with the rules of classical criticism. Their keynote is sincerity and they are tinged with melancholy almost bordering on pessimism. The style is declamatory but eloquent.

Along with Pope and his contemporaries, it is necessary to look at the poets who followed and who some historians call poets of the Age of Johnson. Since no water-tight division of ages is possible, let us now look at some of these poets. James Thomson (1700-1748) who is sometimes credited with having started a school of poetry opposed to that of Pope is best known for *Seasons*, which got him immediate success and fame. In four books the poem describes the four seasons in blank verse and is remarkable for the poet's minute observation. John Dyer (1699-1758) was inspired by mountain scenery, which is seen, in his **Grongar Hill**. **William Collins** (1721—1759) is famous for his odes written in different lyrical measures, the best-known being '*The Ode to Evening*'. Thomas Gray (1716—1771) wrote very little but his *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* is enough to rate him along with the great poets in the English language. In this poem, Gray produces a symphony that strikes a sympathetic chord in every human heart. This is achieved by the truth and sincerity of sentiments, classic restraint, choice yet simple diction as well as the music of the elegiac quatrain.

Check your progress II

i) Fill in the Blanks with Appropriate words/Phrases :

- ii) *The Rape of the Lock* is a _____.
- iii) *The Dunciad* was written to avenge _____'s criticism of Pope.
- iv) Oliver Goldsmith's famous poem is _____.
- v) _____ was a Scottish poet.

1. Match the Words in Columns A: with Appropriate ones in column B:

A	B
i) Thomson	a) London
ii) Dr. Johnson	b) Songs of Innocence
iii) Gray	c) Seasons
iv) Blake	d) Elegy written in a Country Churchyard

12.3 ESSAYISTS

Journalism had grown considerably during the last decade of the 17th century and there was a plentiful supply of newspapers in the reign of Queen Anne. Some of them gave political news, purveyed social gossip and discussed current topics. Some gave importance to social criticism: with a moral and educational aim they attempted to instruct the public 'what to think'. *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* were the most important ones followed by *The Rambler*. The periodical essay, which flourished for only about 50 years, according to Dr. Johnson, "presented general knowledge appropriate for circulation in common talk". With the increase in middle-class readers, these periodicals became very popular. Because of the brevity of individual items and the variety of its contents, the essay played a significant role in such periodicals presenting commentary on politics, religion, society and many other matters. The formal properties of the periodical essay seemed to be largely defined through the practice of Joseph Addison and Richard Steele. These two wrote with such effectiveness and cultivated such attention in their readers that their writings in *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* served as the models for periodical writing in the next few decades.

The Tatler began in 1709 and lasted for about two years after which came *The Spectator*, which was collaboration between Addison and Steele. The moral and educational purpose of the paper was explicitly stated by Addison when he said that it was his ambition 'to bring philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and coffee-houses'.

Richard Steele (1672-1729) and Joseph Addison (1672-1719): As originator of *The Tatler* and co-author of *The Spectator*, Steele has contributed greatly to the development and popularity of the periodical essay. It is impossible to separate the work of Addison and Steele in the periodicals, but the majority of critics believe that the more original parts, the characters, the thought are largely Steele's creation. To Addison fell the work of polishing and perfecting the essay and of adding that touch of

humour, which contributed in great measure to their lasting popularity. *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* are indeed the beginning of the modern essay and their studies of human character, as exemplified in Sir Roger de Coverley, seem to be a preparation of the modern novel. The essays present the best picture of the new social life of England, they advanced the art of literary criticism to a new height and they gave us delightful characters. In style, these essays show the growing perfection of the English language for as Dr. Johnson says, "Whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison". The Periodical Essay continued to grow in the essays of Goldsmith, Dr. Johnson, Swift etc.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS III

1. Answer in Short

- i) Why is the periodical essay considered a precursor to the novel?

- ii) How did Steele and Addison contribute differently to the essays they wrote?

- iii) What was Addison's aim in writing these essays?

- iv) What does Dr. Johnson say about the style of Addison?

- v) List the major contributors to the growth of the Periodical Essay as a genre.

12.4 NOVELISTS

In addition to other major achievements of the Age, the novel as a literary form is an important milestone. Though other genres like the epic, the romance and drama were first produced in other nations, the novel was born in England. The precursors of the novel can be traced to a collection of tales called the *Greek Romances* of the second to sixth centuries, *The Canterbury Tales*, Bacon's *The New Atlantis*, *The Pilgrim's Progress* etc. However, the modern novel probably can be traced to the publication of Richardson's *Pamela* in 1740. In this Age, increase in the reading public and a powerful middle class led to writers moving away from romances and tales of heroic valour to the everyday lives of common people.

Daniel Defoe (1661-1731): His *Robinson Crusoe* generally heads the list of early novels and is one of the few books, which held its popularity for almost two centuries. The charm of the story is its intense reality and in the succession of thoughts, feelings and incidents which every reader feels is true to life. Some critics believe that *Crusoe* represents the whole of human society.

Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) Swift's most famous work *Gulliver's Travels* is a satire on man and his institutions. Written in four parts, the last part shows Swift's bitterness and misanthropy. By a strange quirk of fate, the novel has become a classic for children. Its chief merit is that it is an absorbing tale of adventure. *A Tale of a Tub* and *The Battle of the Books* are his two other important works.

Samuel Richardson (1689—1761) He is credited with having written the first modern novel, an epistolary novel. *Pamela or Virtue Rewarded* is a series of letters telling of the trials, tribulations and the final happy marriage of an unbelievably sweet maiden. Though its success at that time was enormous, it is also considered sentimental, grandiloquent and wearisome. His second novel *Clarissa* which ran into eight volumes was also received with great enthusiasm. He told the story of human life, told it from within.

Henry Fielding (1707-1754) His first novel *Joseph Andrews* was inspired by the success of *Clarissa* and began as a burlesque of the false sentimentality and the conventional virtues of Richardson's heroine. However, the story is of a vagabond and the novelist tells it the aim of 'laughing men out of their follies'. He is direct, vigorous, hilarious and coarse to the point of vulgarity. He wrote other novels of which *Tom Jones* is the most important one. Fielding must be regarded as a great artist of realistic fiction and is indeed the founder of the modern novel.

Smollet (1721-1771) and **Sterne** (1731-1768): Smollet lacked Fielding's genius and seems to crowd his pages with the horrors and brutalities which are sometimes mistaken for realism. He is best known for three works: *Roderick Random*, *Peregrine Pickle* and *Humphrey Clinker*. He models his novels on Don Quixote, trying to follow the

picaresque novel, which was very characteristic of that age. The works of Sterne are the reverse of those of Smollet for the latter was given to coarse vulgarities and the former to whims and vagaries and sentimental tears. His two important works are *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*. The first was never finished even after nine volumes and in the second the reader is never sure how much has been taken or adapted from other writers.

Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774) His only novel, *The Vicar of Wakefield* gives to home-life an enduring romantic interest. In this simple story of common life, Goldsmith seems to have accomplished three noteworthy results--- he has made human fatherhood almost a divine thing, he has glorified moral sentiments and in Dr. Primrose he has created a striking and enduring figure who seems almost like a personal acquaintance rather than a character from a book.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS IV

1. Match the Words in Columns a with Appropriate ones in column B:

A	B
i) Jonathan Swift	a) Pamela
ii) Henry Fielding	b) Robinson Crusoe
iii) Daniel Defoe	c) Vicar of Wakefield
iv) Oliver Goldsmith	d) Tom Jones
v) Samuel Richardson	e) Gulliver's Travels

2. ANSWER IN ONE SENTENCE:

- What were Goldsmith's achievements as a novelist?
- How are the styles of Smollet and Sterne different?
- What was the aim of Fielding's first novel?
- What genre is Pamela?
- What is special about the origin of the novel?

12.5 HISTORIANS

This Age also witnessed prose writings other than the novel and the essay. For example, historians like Edward Gibbon with his *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, David Hume with his *A Treatise of Human Nature*, William Robertson with *The History of Scotland* deserve special mention.

James Boswell's biography *The Life of Samuel Johnson* ranks as one of the best biographies in the English language. Edmund Burke's philosophical writing *A Vindication of Natural Society* and his political work *Conciliation with the Colonies* show all the devices of the orator and fired by an impassioned imagination.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS V

- List the major prose writers of the Age and their works.

12.6 LET US SUM UP

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- List the various genres of the Age
- Understand the reasons for the growth of these genres
- Relate specific works to the writers

12.7 KEY WORDS

- **Periodical essay**—A new literary form that emerged during the early part of the 18th century; came out regularly in affordable publications and were only two to three pages in length
- **Epistolary novel**—A novel written as a series of documents, usually letters
- **Burlesque**---An absurd or comically exaggerated imitation of something, especially in a literary or dramatic work
- **Picaresque novel**--- A genre of prose fiction that depicts the adventures of a roguish but appealing hero, who lives by his wits in a corrupt society
- **Realistic fiction**--- A genre consisting of stories that could have actually occurred; the stories resemble real life

12.8 BOOKS SUGGESTED

1. A Compendious History of English Literature by R.D.Trivedi
2. English Literature by W. J. Long
3. A History of English Literature by Edward Albert

ANSWERS

Check your Progress I

i) True ii) False iii) False iv) False v) True

Check your Progress II

1. i) mock-epic ii) Theobald's iii) Deserted Village iv) Robert Burns
2. i-c, ii-a, iii-d, iv-b

Check your Progress III

Answer in short

Check your Progress IV

i-e, ii-d, iii-b, iv-c, v-a

Check your Progress V

Listing

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B.A (Hons.) English
Semester 2
ENMJ 201
History of English
Literature I

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UNIT 13

ROMANTIC AGE 1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND CHARACTERISTICS

: STRUCTURE :

13.0 Objective

13.1 Introduction

13.2 Historical background and Social context

13.3 Literary Context

13.4 Characteristics of Romantic Age

13.5 Let Us Sum Up

13.6 Key Words

13.7 Books Suggested

Answers

13.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, you shall,

- Learn about historical background of Romantic age
- Understand major characteristic of Romantic age

13.1 INTRODUCTION

Romantic age was an imaginative, literary, musical and intellectual movement that originated in Europe towards the end of the 18th century, and in most areas was at its peak in the approximate period from 1800 to 1850. Romanticism was characterized by its emphasis on emotion and individualism as well as glorification of all the past and nature, preferring the medieval rather than the classical. It was partly a reaction to the Industrial Revolution, the aristocratic social and political norms of the Age of Enlightenment, and the scientific rationalization of nature. It was personified most strongly in the visual arts, music, and literature, but had a major impact on historiography, education, social sciences, and natural sciences. It had a significant and complex effect on politics, with romantic thinkers influencing liberalism, and nationalism.

The movement emphasized intense emotion as an authentic source of aesthetic experience, placing new importance on such emotions as anxiety, horror and terror, and especially that experienced in

confronting the new aesthetic categories of the sublimity and beauty of nature. In contrast to the Rationalism and Classicism of the Enlightenment, Romanticism revived medievalism and elements of art and narrative perceived as authentically medieval in an attempt to escape population growth, early urban sprawl, and industrialism.

The nature of Romanticism may be approached from the primary importance of the free expression of the feelings of the artist. The importance the Romantics placed on emotion is summed up in the remark of the German painter Caspar David Friedrich, "the artist's feeling is his law". For William Wordsworth, poetry should begin as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings", evoking a new but corresponding emotion the poet can then mold into art.

To express these feelings, it was considered the content of art had to come from the imagination of the artist, with as little interference as possible from 'artificial' rules dictating what a work should consist of. Samuel Taylor Coleridge and others believed there were natural laws the imagination at least of a good creative artist would unconsciously follow through artistic inspiration if left alone. The concept of the genius, or artist who was able to produce his own original work through this process of *creation from nothingness*, is the key to Romanticism, and to be derivative was the worst sin. This idea is often called 'romantic originality'.

According to Isaiah Berlin, Romanticism embodied "a new and restless spirit, seeking violently to burst through old and cramping forms, a nervous preoccupation with perpetually changing inner states of consciousness, a longing for the unbounded and the vague, for perpetual movement and change, an effort to return to the forgotten sources of life, a passionate effort at self-assertion both individual and collective, a search after means of expressing an unappeasable yearning for unattainable goals".

13.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

Politics

The political context of the beginning of the Romantic Period is the French Revolution in 1789, the focus of which was to create political and social freedom, equality and brotherhood. The intention was to abolish the power of the ruling classes and to create democracy. These ideas were prevalent in America where the Declaration of Independence had been signed already in 1776. In England political reform gradually developed after some minor disturbances, but without a direct revolution, and in 1832 The Reform Act was passed with the intention of increasing parliamentary representation and reducing corruption.

Industry

At the end of the 18th century manual labor and draught-animal power had come to be replaced by machine-based production. This development started in the textile industry, but quickly spread to other areas of production. As the development of the railway engine introduced the production of trains, and as factories came to be built away from agricultural centers, people began to move from agricultural areas to towns and cities. Thousands of people moving from country to town between 1750 and 1850 changed England from a society based mainly on farming to a society where urban slums were now visible in many cities. Working conditions were grim, people worked up to 16 hours a day, and the pay was miserable. The consequence was, however, that by 1800 England was the most industrialized country in the world, and exports had risen by 500% since 1700. But even if the per capita income increased as a consequence of industrialization, all family members had to work for families to survive. Poverty among the urban population was great, and insufficient housing was common during that era.

13.3 LITERARY CONTEXT

In 1785, the pre-romantic poet William Cowper wrote in *The Task* “that God made the country, and manmade the town”. The Romantics were enthusiastic about nature and especially appreciated areas in nature which had not been touched by human intervention. Simple rural life, which had not been influenced or ruined by the Industrial Revolution and in which man still lived in harmony with nature, was seen as ideal. Parallel to this, childhood was considered a pure period in life characterized by freedom and not distorted by adult norms and conventions. This idea spread after the publication in 1798 of *Lyrical Ballads* by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge and is reflected in much Romantic poetry. A key idea in *Lyrical Ballads* was to speak for the ordinary people in a language which could be understood by everybody. The romantics focused on the individual’s right to imagine and to articulate his emotions and deal with everyday life. In this connection, the task of the poet to express the ideas and feelings experienced by people became important. This can be seen as a reaction to the previous Age of Reason when the general and the rational had played a dominant part.

Novel: Another genre in the romantic period was the novel. Three main categories of the novel can be defined the first of which is the Gothic novel. Mary Shelley’s novel *Frankenstein* is gothic novel. Gothic novels dealt with fantastic and gruesome creatures and incidents and often contained supernatural elements. This novel can be interpreted as a parable of man’s interference with nature, a criticism of some people’s trust in the powers of science or it can be seen as a symbol of alienation. The setting of Gothic literature would often be haunted castles among

ruins and graveyards in wild landscapes far away from civilization. We can still see the influence of gothic literature in fiction and films today.

Another type of novel is the novel of manners. An author whose novels of manners have become extremely popular through their adaptation for film and TV and mash-up novels are those written by Jane Austen. She was particularly interested in social hierarchies, human relations and people's treatment of each other.

The Historical Novel

Important novelist, of this kind of novel is Sir Walter Scott, who dealt with another important aspect of romanticism, namely history or the past, as can be seen in *Ivanhoe* from 1819, his novel about knights and the Causes. From a literary point of view Sir Walter Scott's death in 1832 marks the end of the Romantic Period.

Poetry

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

13.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF ROMANTIC AGE

Nature and the Common Man

It was the age of the 'noble savage'. The Romantics had enough of rationalism and their literature reflected a glorification of nature, the common man and the emotions inherent in each of them. The ideals of the Romantic period were to simplify and return to a less complicated way of life which, because it was more 'natural', and was considered to be superior. The heroes of romantic literature didn't have to be royal or "great" people, but the everyday common person who found wisdom in the world around her and chose a lack of sophistication that was thought to be more honest and forthright.

Classical Ideas and Mythological Imagination

As the authors of romantic literature avoided rationalism, they turned to mythological imagination to create their stories. When they turned to

classical ideas of Greek and Roman literature, it was the mystical elements that they drew upon. The myths were the stuff of great stories and those ideals were woven into the literature of the romantic period. Romantic authors were often fascinated with the supernatural and were the signs of the horror genre. Literature of the period attempted to evoke fear.

Heroes and Nationalism

Whereas neoclassicism had demanded that heroes be noble, the heroes of the romantic period were drawn from the common people. They were also distinct in nationality, with literature drawing upon the history and folklore of the country from which the author came. The heroes were often patriots or folk heroes who helped to form a nation and protect it from outside influences.

Romanticism played an essential role in the national awakening of many Central European people lacking their own national states, not least in Poland, which had recently failed to restore its independence when Russia's army crushed the Polish Uprising under Nicholas I. Revival and reinterpretation of ancient myths, customs and traditions by Romantic poets and painters helped to distinguish their indigenous cultures from those of the dominant nations. Patriotism, nationalism, revolution and armed struggle for independence also became popular themes in the arts of this period. Arguably, the most distinguished Romantic poet of this part of Europe was Adam Mickiewicz, who developed an idea that Poland was the Messiah of Nations, predestined to suffer just as Jesus had suffered to save all the people. The Polish self-image as a "Christ among nations" or the martyr of Europe can be traced back to its history. During the periods of foreign occupation, the Catholic Church served as bastion of Poland's national identity and language, and the major promoter of Polish culture. The partitions came to be seen in Poland as a Polish sacrifice for the security for Western civilization. Adam Mickiewicz wrote the patriotic drama *Dziady*, where he depicts Poland as the Christ of Nations. He also wrote "Verily I say unto you, it is not for you to learn civilization from foreigners, but it is you who are to teach them civilization ... You are among the foreigners like the Apostles among the idolaters". In *Books of the Polish Nation and Polish Pilgrimage* Mickiewicz detailed his vision of Poland as a Messiah and a Christ of Nations that would save mankind. *Dziady* is known for various interpretations. The most known ones are the moral aspect of part II, individualist and romantic message of part IV, as well as deeply patriotic, automatic and Christian vision in part III of the poem.

Unusual Settings

Romantic literature didn't limit itself to just rural settings or those of a particular nationality, though that was definitely one of the characteristics. Authors of this school often chose unusual settings from the past or future, settings with magical or mythic elements or even off-

planet. Just as romantic literature was the forerunner of the horror genre, it was also the forerunner of the fantasy and science fiction genres.

Sublime

According to the Romantics, we experience the sublime when we're out in nature. But not just *any* nature—we have to be facing nature at its outstanding, it's most awe-inspiring. Think big mountains, crazy deep valleys, and a huge thunderstorm with lightning striking everywhere. What happens when we are confronted with nature at its grandest is that we are both terrified and uplifted all at once. It's a hard feeling to describe. The sublime was so important to the Romantics because (1) they loved nature and anything having to do with nature, and (2) they believed that the sublime transcended the rational. That is, the feelings of awe and terror evoked by the sublime are beyond words and the emotions that the sublime creates overwhelm rational thought.

Apart from this,

- Emphasis on emotional and imaginative spontaneity was there
- The importance of self-expression and individual feeling. Romantic poetry is one of the heart and the emotions, exploring the 'truth of the imagination' rather than scientific truth. The 'I' voice is central; it is the poet's perceptions and feelings that matter.
- An almost religious response to nature. They were concerned that Nature should not just be seen scientifically but as a living force, either made by a Creator, or as in some way divine, to be neglected at humankind's peril. Some of them were no longer. Shelley was an atheist, and for a while Wordsworth was a pantheist (the belief that god is in everything). Much of their poetry celebrated the beauty of nature, or protested the ugliness of the growing industrialization of the century: the machines, factories, slum conditions, pollution and so on.
- Emphasis on the imagination as a positive and creative faculty
- An interest in 'primitive' forms of art for instance in the work of early poets (bards), in ancient ballads and folksongs. Some of the Romantics turned back to past times to find inspiration, either to the medieval period, or to Greek and Roman mythology.
- An interest in and concern for the outcasts of society: tramps, beggars, obsessive characters and the poor and disregarded are especially evident in Romantic poetry
- An idea of the poet as a visionary figure, with an important role to play as prophet (in both political and religious terms).

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

1. Define Romantic Age.

2. Discuss major features of Romantic Age.

3. Discuss literary context of Romantic Age.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2

FILL IN THE BLANKS.

1. Romantic age was an imaginative, literary, musical and intellectual movement that originated in Europe towards the end of the century.
2. For, poetry should begin as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings", evoking a new but corresponding emotion the poet can then mold into art.
3. At the end of the century manual labour and draught-animal power had come to be replaced by machine-based production.
4. Walter Scott's died in
5. The political context of the beginning of the Romantic Period is the French Revolution in

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 3

CHOOSE THE CORRECT OPTIONS FROM GIVEN BELOW.

1. When were the Lyrical Ballads published?

(a) 1797

(b) 1798

(c) 1800

2. The Lyrical Ballads closes with

(a) Kubla Khan

(b) Immortality Ode

(c) Lines Written above Tin tern Abbey

3. Who wrote the famous Preface to the Lyrical Ballads?

(a) Coleridge

(b) Southey

(c) Wordsworth

4. William Blake's Song of Innocence came out in.
.

(a) 1776

(b) 1789

(c) 1787

5. Wordsworth's first publication was.

(a) Descriptive Sketches

(b) Poetical Sketches

(c) Lyrical Ballad

13.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you have learnt,

- What is Romantic age and its contribution in the English literature,
- Major features and characteristics of romantic age.

13.6 KEY WORDS

- **Intellectual:** relating to the intellect.
- **Medieval:** relating to the Middle Ages, resembling or likened to the Middle Ages, especially in being cruel, uncivilized, or primitive.
- **Aristocratic:** of, belonging to, or typical of the aristocracy.
- **Aesthetic:** concerned with beauty or the appreciation of beauty.
- **Grim:** very serious or gloomy.
- **Miserable:** wretchedly unhappy or uncomfortable.
- **Folklore:** is the expressive body of culture shared by a particular group of people; it encompasses the traditions common to that culture, subculture or group.
- **Distinct:** recognizably different in nature from something else of a similar type.
- **Patriots:** a person who vigorously supports their country and is prepared to defend it against enemies or detractors.
- **Spontaneity:** the condition of being spontaneous; spontaneous behaviour or action.
- **Tramps:** walk heavily or noisily.
- **Unusual:** not habitually or commonly occurring or done.
- **Genres:** a style or category of art, music, or literature.

13.7 BOOKS SUGGESTED

1. Duncan Wu. *Romanticism: an Anthology*. 3rd edition. Oxford: Blackwell, 2005;
2. Jerome J. McGann. *The New Oxford Book of Romantic Period Verse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.
3. Smith, Logan Pearsall (1924) *Four Words: Romantic, Originality, Creative, Genius*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
4. Barzun, Jacques. 2000. *From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life, 1500 to the Present*. ISBN 978-0-06-092883-4.

ANSWERS

Check Your Progress- 2

1-18th, 2- William Wordsworth, 3-18th , 4-1832, 5-1789.

Check Your Progress- 3

1-B, 2-C, 3-C, 4-B,5-A

UNIT 14

ROMANTIC AGE, MAJOR WRITERS AND LITERARY WORKS

: STRUCTURE :

14.0 Objectives

14.1 Introduction

14.2 Major Writers of Romantic age

14.2.1 William Wordsworth & Samuel Taylor Coleridge

14.2.2 Edgar Allan Poe & Percy Bysshe Shelley

14.2.3 Robert Burns and John Keats

14.2.4 George Crabbe

14.2.5 George Gordon

14.2.6 Sir Walter Scott and John Clare

14.3 Let Us Sum Up

14.4 Key Words

14.5 Books Suggested

Answers

14.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, you will learn

- To understand major writers of Romantic age and be familiarize with their life,
- To get detailed information about their literary works and
- To critically evaluate the major literary works of the age.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

Romanticism was a movement that dominated all genres; including literature, music, art and architecture; in Europe and the United States in the first half of the 19th century. It originated in late 18th century as a reaction against the ideals of order, calm, harmony, idealization and rationality which marked Classicism in general and late 18th-century Neoclassicism in particular. It was influenced by the German movement Sturm und Drang ("storm and drive"), which focused on emotion as opposed to rationalism. Romanticism laid emphasis on emotion and individualism as well as glorification of the past and of nature. The movement was partly a reaction to the Industrial Revolution and the scientific rationalization of nature. The best known English Romantic poet includes Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Keats, Byron, Shelley and many more. In America, the most famous Romantic poet was Edgar Allan Poe; while in France, Victor Marie Hugo was the leading figure of the movement. Here are the most famous Romantic poets and their best known works.

14.2 MAJOR WRITERS AND LITERARY WORKS

14.2.1 William Wordsworth & Samuel Taylor Coleridge

William Wordsworth

Wordsworth, along with Coleridge, launched the Romantic Age in English literature with the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798. From 1799 to 1808, he lived at the Dove Cottage in the village of Grasmere in the Lake District of England. Here he became friend with another prominent poet, Robert Southey. Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey were the three main figures of the group known as Lake Poets, as they all lived in the Lake District. The years 1797 to 1808 are now recognized as the best years of Wordsworth and are known as his Great Decade. After struggling initially, Wordsworth became one of the most renowned poets in his later years and was appointed Poet Laureate of Britain in 1843. *The Prelude*, an autobiographical epic, is widely regarded by critics as his *greatest work* though his *most popular poem* is perhaps *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*, commonly known as *Daffodils*. William Wordsworth is considered a pioneer of Romanticism and one of the greatest poets in English literature. His famous poems include *Daffodils* (1807) *Tintern Abbey* (1798) *The Prelude* (1850)

Wordsworth remained a formidable presence in his later years. In 1837, the Scottish poet and playwright Joanna Baillie reflected on her long acquaintance with Wordsworth. "He looks like a man that one must not speak to unless one has some sensible thing to say. However he does occasionally converse cheerfully & well; and when one knows how

benevolent & excellent he is, it disposes one to be very much pleased with him.

In 1838, Wordsworth received an honorary doctorate in Civil Law from the University of Durham and the following year he was awarded the same honorary degree by the University of Oxford, when John Keble praised him as the "poet of humanity", praise greatly appreciated by Wordsworth. In 1842, the government awarded him a Civil List pension of £300 a year. Following the death of Robert Southey in 1843 Wordsworth became Poet Laureate. He initially refused the honour, saying that he was too old, but accepted when the Prime Minister, Robert Peel, assured him that "you shall have nothing required of you". Wordsworth thus became the only poet laureate to write no official verses. The sudden death of his daughter Dora in 1847 at age 42 was difficult for the aging poet to take and in his depression; he completely gave up writing new material.

In 1814 Wordsworth published *The Excursion* as the second part of the three-part work *The Recluse*, even though he had not completed the first part or the third part, and never did. The Prospectus contains some of Wordsworth's most famous lines on the relation between the human mind and nature:

... my voice proclaims
How exquisitely the individual Mind
(And the progressive powers perhaps no less
Of the whole species) to the external World
Is fitted:—and how exquisitely, too—
Theme this but little heard of among Men,
The external World is fitted to the Mind;
And the creation (by no lower name
Can it be called) which they with blended might
Accomplish ..

Apart from these, other works of Wordsworth include, *Guide to the Lakes* (1810), *To the Cuckoo*, *The Excursion* (1814) *Laodamia* (1815, 1845), *The White Doe of Rylstone* (1815), *Peter Bell* (1819) *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* (1822), *The Prelude* (1850).

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Along with William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge is credited with founding the Romanticism movement in England. In 1797, the two friends broke the decorum of neoclassical verse with daring original poetic works which laid emphasis on emotion and glorification of nature. The following year their collection of poetry *Lyrical Ballads* was published. Though the immediate reaction to *Lyrical Ballads* was modest, it is now considered a landmark work which changed the course of English literature and poetry by launching the influential Romantic Movement. Coleridge is one of the most important figures in English poetry that deeply influenced the major poets of his era including

Wordsworth. Among other things, he is credited with utilizing everyday language to express profound poetic images and ideas. His famous poems includes *Kubla Khan* (1816)*Christabel* (1816)*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798). Coleridge is best known for his longer poems, particularly *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel*. Even those who have never read the *Rime* have come under its influence: its words have given the English language the metaphor of an albatross around one's neck, the quotation of 'water, water everywhere, nor any drop to drink', and the phrase 'a sadder and a wiser man'. The phrase "All creatures great and small" may have been inspired by *The Rime*: "He prayeth best, who loveth best; / All things both great and small; / For the dear God who loveth us; / He made and loveth all." *Christabel* is known for its musical rhythm, language, and its Gothic tale. His conversation poem includes *The Eolian Harp* (1795), *Reflections on having left a Place of Retirement* (1795), *This Lime-Tree Bower my Prison* (1797), *Frost at Midnight* (1798)

Robert Southey

Robert Southey was born in Wine Street, Bristol. He was educated at Westminster School, London, and at Balliol College, Oxford. Southey later said of Oxford, "All I learnt was a little swimming... and a little boating." He was closely associated with Wordsworth and Coleridge and was looked upon as a prominent member, with them, of the "Lake school" of poetry. Experimenting with a writing partnership with Samuel Taylor Coleridge, most notably in their joint composition of *The Fall of Robespierre*, Southey published his first collection of poems in 1794. The same year, Southey, Coleridge, Robert Lovell and several others discussed creating an idealistic community on the banks of the Susquehanna River in America:

He was an English poet of the Romantic school, one of the Lake Poets along with William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and England's Poet Laureate for 30 years from 1813 until his death in 1843. Although his fame has been eclipsed by that of Wordsworth and Coleridge, his verse still enjoys some popularity. His poetry includes *The Inchcape Rock*, *After Blenheim* and many more. His originality is best seen in his ballads and his nine "English Eclogues," three of which were first published in the 1799 volume of his *Poems* with a prologue explaining that these verse sketches of contemporary life bore "no resemblance to any poems in our language." His "Oriental" narrative poems *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801) and *The Curse of Kehama* (1810) were successful in their own time, but his fame is based on his prose work—the *Life of Nelson* (1813), and his classic formulation of the children's tale "The Three Bears."

14.2.2 Edgar Allan Poe and Percy Bysshe Shelley

Edgar Allan Poe

Widely regarded as a central figure of Romanticism in the United States, Edgar Allan Poe is one of the most influential and famous figures of American literature. His poems appear throughout popular culture and lines from them are often quoted. Poe is celebrated as the supreme exponent of *Dark Romanticism*, a genre which focuses on human frailty, self-destruction, judgement, punishment and the demonic; as well as the psychological effects of guilt and sin. One of the prominent themes in his poems is the death of a young, beautiful and dearly loved woman; which he called “*the most poetical topic in the world*”. The best known poem of Poe is *The Raven*. It influenced numerous later works including the famous painting *Nevermore* by Paul Gauguin. Apart from being one of the most famous poets, Edgar Allan Poe is considered the inventor of the detective fiction genre and an important contributor to the emerging genre of science fiction. His poems include *The Raven* (1845), *Annabel Lee* (1849), *A Dream Within a Dream* (1849). His short story work includes, ‘*The Black Cat*’, ‘*The Cask of Amontillado*’, ‘*A Descent into the Maelström*’, ‘[*The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar*](#)’, ‘*The Fall of the House of Usher*’, ‘*The Gold-Bug*’, ‘*Hop-Frog*’, ‘*The Imp of the Perverse*’, ‘*Ligeia*’, ‘*The Masque of the Red Death*’, ‘*Morella*’. His poetry includes ‘*Al Aaraaf*’, ‘*Annabel Lee*’, ‘*The Bells*’, ‘*The City in the Sea*’, ‘*The Conqueror Worm*’, ‘*A Dream Within a Dream*’, ‘*Eldorado*’, ‘*Eulalie*’, ‘*The Haunted Palace*’, ‘*To Helen*’, ‘*Lenore*’, ‘*Tamerlane*’, ‘*The Raven*’, ‘*Ulalume*’.

P.B Shelley

Percy Bysshe Shelley was one of the leading “*second generation*” Romantic poets and he created some of the best known works of the movement. He was a controversial writer whose poems are marked by uncompromising idealism and great personal conviction. Though he produced works throughout his life, most publishers and journals declined to publish them for fear of being arrested for either profanity or sedition. As a result Shelley couldn’t gather a mainstream following during his lifetime. However, his popularity grew steadily following his death and ultimately he achieved worldwide fame and acclaim. Apart from being an idol for later generation of poets, Percy Bysshe Shelley also exerted influence on such prominent figures as the German philosopher Karl Marx and the Indian freedom fighter Mahatma Gandhi. He is considered one of the greatest poets in the English language. His works include *Ozymandias* (1818), *Ode to the West Wind* (1820), *Prometheus Unbound* (1820). His prose work includes *The Assassins*, *A Fragment of a Romance* (1814), *The Coliseum*, *A Fragment* (1817) and *The Elysian Fields: A Lucianic Fragment* (1818). His essay includes *The Necessity of Atheism* (with T. J. Hogg) (1811), *Poetical Essay on the Existing State of Things* (1811), *An Address, to the Irish People* (1812), *Declaration of Rights* (1812), *A Letter to Lord*

Ellenborough (1812), A Vindication of Natural Diet (1813), A Refutation of Deism (1814), Speculations on Metaphysics (1814)

14.2.3 Robert Burns and John Keats

Robert Burns

Robert Burns is widely regarded as the *national poet of Scotland*. He was considered a *pioneer of Romanticism* who had a major influence on the movement. The poetic style of Burns is marked by spontaneity and sincerity; and it ranges from love to intensity to humour and satire. His best known works include *Scots Wha Hae*, which served as an unofficial national anthem of Scotland for many years; *A Red, Red Rose*, among the best known love poems; Robert Burns is the *most widely read Scottish poet* and he is celebrated not only in his country but around the world. He remains a cultural icon in his nation and in 2009, he was voted as the greatest Scot by the Scottish public in a vote run by Scottish television channel STV. His famous work includes *To a Mouse (1785)* *A Red, Red Rose (1794)*. Major theme of his works included republicanism and Radicalism, which he expressed covertly in "Scots Wha Hae", Scottish patriotism, anticlericalism, class inequalities, gender roles, commentary on the Scottish Kirk of his time, Scottish cultural identity, poverty, sexuality, and the beneficial aspects of popular socializing. His direct literary influences in the use of Scots in poetry were Allan Ramsay and Robert Fergusson. Burns influenced later Scottish writers, especially Hugh MacDiarmid, who fought to dismantle what he felt had become a sentimental cult that dominated Scottish literature. His one of the famous poems is *A Red, Red Rose*,

O my Luve is like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June;
O my Luve is like the melody
That's sweetly played in tune.
So fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luve am I;
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry...

John Keats

Along with Lord Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Keats was one of the most prominent figures of the second generation of English Romantic poets. Keats died due to tuberculosis in 1821 at the age of only 25. His work was in publication for only four years and it was not generally well received by critics during his lifetime. However, his reputation grew after his death and by the end of the 19th century, he became one of the most beloved of all English poets. The most famous and acclaimed poems of Keats are a series of six odes known as the Odes of 1819. The most highly regarded among these is *To Autumn*, which has been called one of the most perfect short poems in the English language.

Through his 1819 odes, Keats created a new type of short lyrical poem, which influenced later generations. His work includes *To Autumn* (1820) *Ode on a Grecian Urn* (1820) *When I have Fears* (1848).

He wrote later: "I am certain of nothing but the holiness of the Heart's affections and the truth of Imagination – What the imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth whether it existed before or not for I have the same Idea of all our Passions as of Love they are all in their sublime, creative of essential Beauty'. In September 1819, Keats wrote to Reynolds "How beautiful the season is now – How fine the air. A temperate sharpness about it ... I never lik'd the stubbled fields as much as now – Aye, better than the chilly green of spring. Somehow the stubble plain looks warm – in the same way as some pictures look warm – this struck me so much in my Sunday's walk that I composed upon it" and the final stanza of his last great ode, *To Autumn*, runs:

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,-
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue.

14.2.4 George Crabbe

George Crabbe

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

14.2.5 George Gordon

George Gordon Byron born in 22 January 1788 and died in 19 April 1824, known simply as Lord Byron, was an English peer, who was a poet and politician. He was one of the leading figures of the Romantic movement, and is regarded as one of the greatest English poets. He remains widely read and influential. Among his best-known works are the lengthy narrative poems *Don Juan* and *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*; many of his shorter lyrics in *Hebrew Melodies* also became popular. Byron received his early formal education at Aberdeen Grammar School, and in August 1799 entered the school of Dr. William Glennie, in Dulwich. Placed under the care of a Dr. Bailey, he was encouraged to exercise in moderation but could not restrain himself from "violent" bouts in an attempt to overcompensate for his deformed foot. His mother

interfered with his studies, often withdrawing him from school, with the result that he lacked discipline and his classical studies were neglected. George differed from Shelley and Keats in themes and manner, was at one with them in reflecting their shift toward “Mediterranean” topics. Having thrown down the gauntlet in his early poem *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809), in which he directed particular scorn at poets of sensibility and declared his own allegiance to Milton, Dryden, and Pope, he developed poetry of dash and flair, in many cases with a striking hero. His two longest poems, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* (1812–18) and *Don Juan* (1819–24), his masterpiece, provided alternative personae for himself, the one a bitter and melancholy exile among the historic sites of Europe, the other a picaresque adventurer enjoying a series of amorous adventures. The gloomy and misanthropic vein was further mined in dramatic poems such as *Manfred* (1817) and *Cain* (1821), which helped to secure his reputation in Europe, but he is now remembered best for witty, ironic, and less significant writings, such as *Beppo* (1818), in which he first used the ottavavima form. The easy, nonchalant, biting style developed there became a formidable device in *Don Juan* and in his satire on Southey, *The Vision of Judgment* (1822).

14.2.6 Sir Walter Scott and John Clare

Sir Walter Scott

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

John Clare

A man of humble background, achieved early success with *Poems Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery* (1820), *The Village Minstrel* (1821), and *The Shepherd’s Calendar* (1827). Both his reputation and his mental health collapsed in the late 1830s. He spent the later years of his life in an asylum in Northampton; the poetry he wrote there was rediscovered in the 20th century. His natural simplicity and lucidity of diction, his intent observation, his almost Classical poise, and the unassuming dignity of his attitude to life make him one of the most quietly moving of English poets.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION. (LONG QUESTION)

Discuss any two writer of Romantic Age

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2

WRITE SHORT NOTES

1. William Wordsworth
2. Samuel Taylor Coleridge
3. Edgar Allan Poe
4. Percy Bysshe Shelley
5. Rober Burns
6. John Keats

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 3

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. _____ lived at the *Dove Cottage*
2. _____ was born in Wine Street, Bristol.
3. Best known poem of Poe is _____
4. _____ was one of the leading “*second generation*” Romantic poets
5. _____ is widely regarded as the *national poet of Scotland*.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 4

CHOOSE THE CORRECT OPTIONS FROM GIVEN BELOW.

1. Robert Browning criticized this Romantic for abandoning his ideals and becoming conservative, all so that he might, in Browning's opinion, receive "a riband to stick in his coat."
 - a) William Wordsworth
 - b) Lord Byron
 - c) John Keats
2. Though an icon of the Romantic period, his works are in some ways the least romantic of the group. He favored traditional forms over new innovations; he preferred satire to introspection; and in "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," he ridiculed his fellow Romantics as being inferior to the neoclassical poets.
 - a) William Wordsworth
 - b) Lord Byron
 - c) John Keats
3. author of "To a Skylark" died by drowning.
 - a) Percy Bysshe Shelley
 - b) Wordsworth
 - c) Lord Byron
4. Wordsworth's first publication was.
 - a) **Descriptive Sketches**
 - b) Poetical Sketches
 - c) Lyrical Ballad
5. defines "Poetry as a spontaneous overflow of power flow feeling"
 - a) Coleridge
 - b) **Wordsworth**
 - c) Keats

14.3 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, you have learnt,

- Familiarize with the life and times of the important Romantic writers
- Major writers of Romantic Age and their works

14.4 KEY WORDS

- **Dominate:** have power and influence over.
- **Harmony:** the combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce a pleasing effect.
- **Formidable:** inspiring fear or respect through being impressively large, powerful, intense, or capable.
- **Acquaintance:** a person one knows slightly, but who is not a close friend.
- **Occasionally:** at infrequent or irregular intervals; now and then.
- **Decorum:** behaviour in keeping with good taste and propriety.
- **Immediate:** occurring or done at once; instant.
- **Influences:** the capacity to have an effect on the character, development, or behaviour of someone or something, or the effect itself.

14.5 BOOKS SUGGESTED

1. "Wordsworth, William (WRDT787W)". *A Cambridge Alumni Database*. University of Cambridge
2. *Poetical Works*. Oxford Standard Authors. London: Oxford U.P. 1936.
3. Wordsworth, William (4 January 1810). "French Revolution". *The Friend* (20). Retrieved 8 June 2018.
4. *Poetical Works*. Oxford Standard Authors. London: Oxford U.P. 1936
5. Oueijan, Naji B. *A Compendium of Eastern Elements in Byron's Oriental Tales*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1999.

ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 3

1- William Wordsworth, 2- Robert Southey, 3- *The Rave*, 4- Percy Bysshe Shelley, 5- Robert Burns

Check Your Progress 4

1-A, 2-B, 3-A, 4-A, 5-B

UNIT 15

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERARY CHARACTERISTICS OF VICTORIAN AGE

: STRUCTURE :

15.0 Objectives

15.1 Victorian Age: Introduction

15.2 Historical Background of the Victorian Age

15.2.1. The Industrial Revolution

15.2.2. Science and Scientific Thought

15.2.3. The Great Exhibition of 1851

15.2.4. The Chartist Movement (1838-48)

15.3 Literary Characteristics of the Victorian Age

15.3.1 The Victorian Novel

15.3.1.1 The Origin of the Novel Form and Its Precursors

15.3.1.2 The Rise of the Victorian Novel

15.3.1.3 Characteristics of the Victorian Novel

15.3.1.3.1 Realism

15.3.1.3.2 Morality or Moral Purpose

15.3.1.3.3 Serialization of Novels

15.3.1.3.4 Social Problem Novels

15.3.1.3.5 Women Novelists

15.3.1.3.6 Science Fiction Novels

15.3.2 The Victorian Poetry

15.3.2.1 Realism

15.3.2.2 Focus on Urban Life

15.3.2.3 Pessimism

15.3.2.4 Questioning the God

15.3.2.5 Social Reform

15.3.2.6 Dramatic Monologue

15.3.3 The Victorian Prose

15.4 Let Us Sum Up

15.5 Key Words

15.6 Books Suggested Answers

15.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this unit are:

- To discuss in detail, the major historical events of the Victorian age,
- To acquaint you with the historical background for the study of the Victorian age of literature and
- To discuss in detail, the various literary characteristics of the Victorian age.

15.1 THE VICTORIAN AGE: AN INTRODUCTION

As the name suggests, the literature produced in English language during the reign of queen Victoria (1837-1901) is known as Victorian literature. It was remarkable in numerous ways. The literature written and produced during this age was a true and accurate reflection of contemporary Victorian society. The “Victorian Compromise”, “Victorian Values” and morality found ample reflection in the works of Victorian writers. Also, the literature written and produced during this age was in many ways a breakaway from the literature produced in earlier ages. The romantic age, in the poetical writings of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats and Byron, was predominantly an age of poetry, especially with its focus on nature and rural life. But Victorian literature, highly influenced by the ongoing contemporary socio-political and industrial activities, was more of a reflection of contemporary urban Victorian society. The literature of the age was also marked by new literary developments. It became an age of prose and novel, an age of realistic appeal to readers. In all, it was an age of political and social struggle which found expression in the literature of the age. The following sections will acquaint the readers with the historical, social and political background of Victorian society and its reflection in the literature of the age.

15.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE VICTORIAN AGE

The Victorian age was an age of significant historical changes. The reign of Queen Victoria proved to be so fruitful for the English nation that almost every aspect of common life was influenced by the

historical events that happened during this era. The historical and social changes of the period were unprecedented in the sense that the common life was completely caught in the storm of transformation. The changes that took place during these years altered the fabric of human life in numerous ways. This section will acquaint the readers with the key historical events of the period and their effects on the lives of Victorian people.

15.2.1. The Industrial Revolution

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were years of great and significant changes in the history of mankind. A series of great events took place that quickly altered the fabric of human society. The late eighteenth century witnessed the emergence of the French Revolution (1789-1799) that dramatically and quickly transformed the political structure of France, and the early nineteenth century saw the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815) that spread many of the revolutionary principles in an equally rapid and stunning fashion to other parts of Europe. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, another revolution—an industrial one—was blooming to transform the economic and social structure of Europe, although in a less dramatic and rapid fashion.

The First Industrial Revolution (1760-1840) is one of the most significant events in the history of humankind. It has been said that the Industrial Revolution was the most profound revolution in human history because of its sweeping impact on people's daily lives. The great event was at the heart of every significant change that took place in Great Britain in that period. While the Industrial Revolution first began in Britain in the 18th century and took place throughout the centuries that followed, its impact can still be seen in our lives today. The ease and the rapidity with which people are living today is a miracle of the Industrial Revolution that happened in the eighteenth century. Even the present time is no less influenced by it since the mechanized world in which people are living today is a wonder of the First Industrial Revolution. Although the Industrial Revolution began in the mid-eighteenth century, its most profound effects could be seen in the Victorian England of the nineteenth century. The English life totally came under the current of transformation and change since the industrial revolution had permeated every single aspect of English life.

The period of the Industrial Revolution witnessed a quantum leap in industrial production. New sources of energy and power, especially coal and steam, replaced wind and water to create labor-saving machines that dramatically decreased the use of human and animal labor and, at the same time, increased the level of productivity. There occurred a transition from hand production methods to machines, new chemical manufacturing and iron production processes, the increasing use of steam power and water power, the development of machine tools and the rise of the mechanized factory system. In turn, the human labor was organized in new ways to maximize the benefits and profits from the new machines. Factories began to develop and eventually replaced small shops and home workrooms. The workers who were working at their homes were forced

to migrate towards places where factories were established, and worked there for a living.

Another very important aspect of the industrial revolution was the rise of the new middle-class. Earlier, there was only one class in English society: the upper class. As the industrial revolution gained momentum in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, there emerged a new class of people altogether. It gave rise to a group of wealthy, educated and important men. The great event affected a considerable growth in the average income of English people. Because of the newly created job opportunities, people began to earn more and more money and there emerged a new social class: the middle-class. The phenomenal rise in the number of middle-class households is undoubtedly a characteristic feature of Victorian England. It was truly a Victorian phenomenon.

Prior to the Industrial Revolution, for more than ten thousand years, farming or agriculture was the main occupation of the majority of people. But in the wake of the industrial revolution, Europe experienced a shift from a traditional, labor-intensive economy based on farming and handicrafts to a more capital-intensive economy based on manufacturing by machines, specialized labor, and industrial factories. It influenced the lives of millions of people since Europe was moving towards a capitalist economy. Agriculture or farming was modernized as there appeared new tools and practices of farming. The agricultural yield increased due to these advanced changes and it became a source of additional income for people. The agricultural production was now not merely for 'use' but for 'profit' also.

Science seemed to be on the bucket list of the Industrial Revolution. Victorian England had already taken an open stance toward science. Science developed by leaps and bounds in this period. Medical science was growing quickly, and the Industrial Revolution was the chief engine behind various advancements that took place in medical science. It allowed medical instruments (such as scalpels, microscope lenses, test tubes, and other equipment) to be produced more quickly. Using machine manufacturing, refinements to these instruments could more efficiently roll out to the physicians that needed them. As communication between physicians in different areas improved, the details behind new cures and treatments for various diseases could be dispersed quickly, resulting in better care.

The Industrial revolution also effected an increase in population. The population of London was about 2 million when Queen Victoria came to the throne in 1837; in 1901 when she died, the population of London drastically increased to about 6.5 million. A large number of people relocated from rural regions to large cities to be closer to their new factory workplaces. This population increase had severe consequences since slums began to develop in cities and serious health issues began to crop up in English society.

But besides being an era of economic expansion and rapid growth, the Victorian era was also an era of gross injustice and ill mentality. In the pursuit of wealth, society was becoming more and more insensitive

towards poor working-class people. Children and women (including pregnant women) were exploited to unimaginable limits. They were worked for long hours, without protective gears, in unhygienic conditions, on low wages. They lived in squalid slums thereby increasing the chances of catching serious health diseases. And thus, the great industrial revolution had far-reaching negative consequences which later became the subject matter for the novels of Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray, Elizabeth Gaskell and other writers of the Victorian era. The greatly hailed Industrial Revolution, as mentioned, had many dark sides to it, and this is amply reflected in the literature of the age.

15.2.2. Science and Scientific Thought

The English society was primarily a theocentric one, putting the Church or God at the central focus of English life. It was a deeply religious place under strong papal control. The Roman Catholic Church wielded immense power, and deviation from the Catholic faith could mean trial for heresy or a painful death at the hands of authorities. The general English faith was constructed around God. The Church was the principal body of English society governing the belief of the English population. But with time, it slowly began to move away from the theocentric belief due to several reasons. The Enlightenment Age or the Age of Reason in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had already underscored the human being's ability to 'reason'. There was a growing insistence on reason and logic. Besides, the Great Plague of London that broke out in the seventeenth century and killed thousands of people shattered people's belief in God. A certain percentage of the English population began questioning the existence of God following the Black Death.¹ The English life was moving more and more towards reason and science. To recognize, promote and support excellence in science and to encourage the development and use of science for the benefit of humanity, The Royal Society was also found in 1660. So, in all, there developed space and environment for science to prosper. Science was slowly developing in the Victorian era, and Charles Darwin burst onto the scene with his *On the Origin of Species* in 1859 and came up with his famous theory of Evolution. Darwin's book is believed to have challenged the Church's established idea of human birth and existence. There arose serious debates surrounding Darwin's theory and his ideas were taken seriously since he was an eminent scientist.

The Industrial Revolution also played an important role in the development of science since it was an age of machines. The scientific achievements of the Victorian era are remarkable in human history. The period from 1837 to 1901 is regarded as an era of prosperity and knowledge. The spread of education and affluence encouraged innovation, experimentation and scientific ideas. Developments took place in almost all the areas like transportation, communication, trade and so on. Medical science was growing by leaps and bounds in the Victorian era since the pre-Victorian period and the beginning of 1800s was brimming with diseases. Diseases like typhoid, smallpox, tuberculosis

and epidemics began to spread rapidly and violently taking away many lives. Edward Jenner in 1796 introduced the vaccine for smallpox. Anesthesia, a vital contribution to medical science, was also developed in this era.

The Victorian era also witnessed one of the most significant technological inventions of human history in 1837: the telegraph. The invention of the telegraph indeed revolutionized the communication system of the country. The telephone, the most vibrant medium of communication today was discovered by Alexander Graham Bell in 1876. With the invention of the telephone, telegraphs became obsolete as the telephone was an easier, cheaper medium of communication than the former. The invention of the telephone was one of the most powerful creations of the Victorian period. Cars and bicycles, internal combustion engine, the electric bulb and railways are some of the other major inventions of the Victoria era.

15.2.3. The Great Exhibition of 1851

Exhibitions of industrial products are not new. They date back to the 1790s in France and then fairly regularly there through the 1820s and 1830s. But these exhibitions were only ‘national’ in the sense that they involved only one country. There were no international exhibitions of any kind until John Scott Russell in 1849 advised Prince Albert that there should be a major exhibition in 1851, and Albert insisted that it must be an ‘international’ one. So, the Great Exhibition of 1851, officially called ‘The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations’, was the first international trade show of Britain. The exhibition took place in Hyde Park, London, from 1 May to 15 October 1851. A special building, The Crystal Palace, designed by an English architect named Richard Paxton, was built to house the show. The Exhibition was organized by Henry Cole and by Prince Albert, husband of the reigning monarch, Queen Victoria. Several fundraising events were organized to fund this great event. The Great Exhibition of 1851 was probably the high point of Victorian success and self-esteem. The exhibition was staged to show Britain at the height of its wealth, power and influence, economic expansion and rapid change.

In 1851, Great Britain stood at the very pinnacle of industrial and cultural leadership of the world. The exhibition was staged particularly to reflect the industrial and architectural grandeur of Britain and its economic dominance. It was an ostentatious display of economic prosperity of the vainglorious Britain. The exhibition was visited by about six million people from May to October, and that included some famous visitors also such as William Makepeace Thackeray, Charles Darwin, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Louis Carroll and Charlotte Bronte. Charlotte Bronte, the great Victorian era woman novelist, provided her account of the great exhibition. She noted ‘. . . it is a wonderful place – vast, strange, new and impossible to describe. Its grandeur does not consist in one thing, but in the unique assemblage of all things. Whatever human industry has created you find there . . . it seems as if only magic could have gathered this mass of wealth from all the ends of the earth – as

if none but supernatural hands could have arranged it thus, with such a blaze and contrast of colours and marvellous power of effect. . .’

The great exhibition was organized not only to display Britain’s industrial goods but also the ‘Works of Industry of All Nations’, a global display of art and industrial manufacturing. The chief focus of the Great Exhibition was on the world’s cultural and industrial technology. The goods from different parts of the world were put on display in the exhibition but a majority of them were from Britain and British colonies. On display were objects from Britain’s colonies and some other countries of the world ranging from manufacturing machinery to steam hammers. There were inventions and discoveries, furniture, fine textiles, pottery, laces, clocks, toys, colorful glasses and much more. Some very famous and precious Indian stones were also on display in the Crystal Palace including the prized diamond, the “Koh-i-Noor” or “Kohinoor”, and the “Daria-i-Noor”, one of the rare pale pink diamonds of the world. This great exhibition had such a commercial upshot that it reinforced industrial production and marketing. The new industrial production of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had already changed the face of human life and the Great Exhibition fortified its marketing and selling by proclaiming the industrial success to the world. The great event established and further solidified the foundation of industrial success for Great Britain. It was an event that profoundly escalated British trade in the nineteenth century and was one of the major reasons behind the Victorian era being recognized as an era of industrial success and economic prosperity. The present-day commercial industries still have impressions of the Great Exhibition of 1851. It was indeed a landmark event in the history of Britain and humankind that altered the face of industrial productions and profit businesses in toto.

15.2.4. The Chartist Movement (1838-1848)

The mid-nineteenth century brought significant changes to the British Parliament. The Reform Act was passed in June 1832. It was known as the Great Reform Act. The major reason behind passing the act was many years of people criticizing the electoral system as unfair. For example, there were constituencies with only a handful of voters that elected two MPs to the Parliament. In these rotten boroughs, with few voters and no secret ballot, it was easy for candidates to buy votes. Yet towns like Manchester and other newly developed cities (because of the industrial development) that had grown during the previous 80 years had no MPs to represent them. The Great Reform Act introduced major changes to the electoral system of England and Wales. Under the act, tiny districts were abolished, cities were given representations, and small landowners, tenant farmers, shopkeepers, householders who were paying a yearly rental of £10 or more, were given the right to vote. But people who did not possess property worth £10, which used to be a substantial sum in those days, were disenfranchised. So naturally, working-class people were deprived of their right to vote.

The industrial revolution had given rise to the middle class. Because of the increased average income and improved standards of living, middle-class people were able to possess a property worth £10.

But no provisions were made for people belonging to the working class. After the Reform Act of 1832 failed in extending the voting rights to the working-class and enfranchising them, serious agitations emerged against the parliament since the working class believed that the parliament and the middle class betrayed them by disenfranchising them for not possessing any property worth £10. There emerged a massive wave of opposition from the working class. It became a mass movement when a huge number of working-class people gathered in demand for their right to vote. Chartism was this working-class movement which emerged in 1836 and remained most active in the following ten years until 1848.

In the year 1838, a committee of the protestors published the People's Charter, which set out the movement's six main aims. The charted aims would give the working-class people a say in lawmaking as they would be able to vote, their vote would be protected by a secret ballot and they would be able to stand for election to the House of Commons as a result of the removal of property qualifications and the introduction of payment for MPs. The protestors of the Chartism Movement came to be recognized as 'Chartists'. These chartists saw themselves as bringing a democratic change to English society and parliament, and against political corruption. The six main aims of the movement were as follows:

- 1) A vote for every man twenty-one years of age.
- 2) The use of secret ballot to protect the elector in the exercise of his vote.
- 3) No property qualification to become an MP.
- 4) Payment for MPs to leave or interrupt their livelihood to attend to the interests of the nation.
- 5) Electoral districts of equal size.
- 6) Annual elections for parliament.

The movement proved to be significant in bringing the working-class people to the forefront of the English nation. It also changed the way parliament, upper-class and middle-class looked at the working-class population. They too now had the right and authority to choose their own representative to the parliament. The nation was slowly and gradually coming onto the right political track. But women were still out of the picture since Chartism was only a male suffrage movement. Despite this, it proved to be a significant political event in the history of Britain since it enfranchised the working-class which was at the heart of Britain's industrial production.

15.3 LITERARY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VICTORIAN AGE

The Victorian era was a time of profound historical and cultural changes. Every aspect of English society had been deeply affected by them. The population nearly doubled, the British Empire expanded exponentially and the technological and industrial progress helped Britain become the most powerful country in the world. The great events that took place during the period totally revolutionized the English life.

Almost every aspect of English society had slipped into the control of machines thereby reducing the human interaction with production. Literature too was not less influenced by these changes. It is important to note that the literature of the age reflects the contemporary Victorian society in ways more than one. It is ruminative of what Victorian society had become because of the significant historical and cultural changes. In the following sections, we shall be studying the different literary characteristics of the Victorian age.

15.3.1. The Victorian Novel

The literature of the Victorian age was most remarkable for its development of the novel form and taking it to perfection. The novel as a literary form flourished unprecedentedly in the Victorian era. It became the most popular form of literature in the hands of Victorian novelists. It was the pleasantest form of literary entertainment. As many have said, the novel was to the Victorian age what drama was to the Elizabethan age. The novel fills a place in this age which the drama held in the age of Elizabeth. Never before in any age or language has the novel appeared in such mass number and in such perfection. The novel form began to gain popularity only after it was treated by the Victorian hands. The Victorian novelists, in fact, polished the newly developed novel form and made it the most popular form of literary expression. In the following sections, we shall be looking at the origin of the novel as a literary form, its development in the Victorian age, its characteristics and how it influenced future novels.

15.3.1.1. The Origin of the Novel Form and Its Precursors

The novel is one of the most widely read forms of literature today. A great number of novels are published every year and read by millions of people across the globe. It is still one of the most popular literary forms among the literati. But the origin of the novel form dates back to the early eighteenth century when prose as a literary medium rose to prominence in the Augustan Age of English Literature. The literature of the eighteenth century falls under the category of Augustan Age or Classical Age or the Age of Pope. Prose as a new medium of literary expression gained considerable significance and popularity in the writings of these eighteenth-century writers. When we compare this age with previous ages, we find that every preceding age was dominated by poetry and poetical works (verse drama, for that matter). These poetry and poetical works constitute the 'glory of English literature', according to Matthew Arnold. It was the most dominant form of literary expression from Chaucer, through Shakespeare and Milton, to Dryden. But it was in the eighteenth century that prose as a medium of literary expression emerged and rose to prominence. The eighteenth century witnessed the triumph of prose. It was in this period of prose dominance that the first English novel appeared. A novel is a long work of narrative fiction, mainly written in prose form. Daniel Defoe is credited with writing and publishing the first English novel in 1719 when he published *Robinson Crusoe*. Defoe also

published another novel, *Moll Flanders* in 1722. Novelists such as Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, Laurence Sterne, Oliver Goldsmith and Tobias Smollett came after Daniel Defoe to take the form to newer heights. Since then, the English novel has not looked back and has continued to rise to newer heights. Its popularity as a literary genre has never diminished. These novelists tried and succeeded in writing novels. The novel after these initial years was slowly becoming a popular literary form.

The writers that came after Daniel Defoe took the form to newer heights with the publication of their novels. Samuel Richardson is considered one of the precursors of the novel form. He has authored epistolary novels such as *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740) and *Clarissa* (1747-48). Henry Fielding is also considered an important early novelist of English language, who wrote *Joseph Andrews* (1742) and *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling* (1749). Laurence Sterne published *Tristram Shandy* in parts between 1759 to 1767; Oliver Goldsmith wrote *The Vicar of the Wakefield* (1766); Tobias Smollett, known for his comic picaresque novels, wrote *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* (1751) and *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771). It is also important to note that Charles Dickens, the greatest novelist of the Victorian age, was greatly influenced by the writings of Tobias Smollett. These early English novelists had a profound influence on the writings of Victorian novelists for they had set the tone for the novel to succeed in the canon of English literature.

15.3.1.2. The Rise of the Victorian Novel

The nineteenth century saw the novel scaling new heights in the realm of literature. It became the most popular literary form of the period. Following the great literary tradition set by the novelists of the eighteenth century, the writers of the Victorian era began writing novels and achieved tremendous success. The novel reached its zenith in the nineteenth century era in the writings of Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray, the Bronte sisters, Elizabeth Gaskell, George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans) and many other notable English novelists. Although the seeds of the novel as a literary genre were sown in the early eighteenth century of Augustan Age, it was in the Victorian era that the form gained mass acceptance and substantial popularity. It began to be picked up by the maximum number of readers, including women. The Victorian age became remarkable because of the increased release of novels and novelists during this period.

The Victorian period was remarkable because of the significant historical, cultural, social, political and industrial changes. It was an era of economic expansion and rapid growth. For the first time the middle class had come into existence in Britain and other parts of Europe. This rise of the middle class was one of the factors that helped the novel grow and develop. More and more middle-class people were turning to books for gaining knowledge. The growing needs of the middle-class readership were addressed by novels as novelists began to write more and more novels. The Victorian novel rose to entertain the rising middle class.

There was a growing demand from the readers of the form since a greater number of readers were picking up novels. David Daiches, a historian said, the novel “was in a large measure the product of the middle class, appealing to middle-class ideals and sensibilities, a patterning of imagined events set against a clearly realized social background and taking its view of what was significant in human behavior from agreed public attitudes.” The characters of the Victorian novels are from middle-class and this appealed to the middle-class readers since they could connect to those fictional characters. There were no romantic stories but believable life struggles that garnered the attention of millions of readers. An Education Act was also passed in 1870 which set the framework for schooling of all children between the age of 5 and 12 furthermore increasing the literacy rates among the population. Because of the industrial revolution, many job opportunities were also created. Certain jobs required a certain level of reading ability and the Victorian novel catered to the needs of such people.

Britain was becoming a ‘Constitutional Monarchy’ which brought democracy to the nation. In turn, the democracy opened the doors of education to all which resulted in the considerable spread of literacy among the English population. The newly educated mass began to invest their spare time in reading novels which resulted in the growing demand for novels. Poetry was there since ages but it could not cater to the taste of the growing middle-class readership. The reading of poetry needed great technical knowledge and it proved to be ‘insufficient’ in addressing the reading taste of the newly developed readership. The novel in this sense was capable of providing the English readers with what they wanted. Besides, the growth of cities, a ready domestic market and one in the oversea colonies and an increase in printing and publishing houses in the democratic and industrial Britain facilitated the growth of the novel as a form.

Some historians have also attributed the growth and success of the novel form to the decline of drama in the nineteenth century. The drama was no longer in the picture in the Victorian age. No drama of any significance was written and staged during this era. People desired reading about everyday events which the drama would not have been able to achieve. There was also the desire on the part of writers to create something new in the canon of literature as poetry and drama had been in the picture for long since Chaucer. A kind of literary revolution was required to address the changing literary needs of the English readers which the novel was able to gratify. The drama had become absolutely outdated and had lost its appeal to the readers. Novels on the other hand were relatively more significant in improving the readers’ knowledge. They were multidimensional in the sense that they gave more freedom to the writer than the drama since the traditional dramas were written in accordance with prescribed rules and had limited scope. The novel on the other hand could talk about every possible thing. Reading novels provided the newly developed readership with new knowledge of the contemporary world. Thus, drama’s decline resulted in the growth and prominence of the novel as a literary form.

The nineteenth century was also known for the emergence of newspapers and magazines since prose as a medium was increasingly becoming prominent. It is believed by historians that the emergence of newspapers and magazines contributed to the rise of the novel form in the sense that the newly emerged readership was more interested in the realistic portrayal of contemporary Victorian society. The newspapers and magazines were among the most prominent forms of writing that attracted a large number of readers. It is a well-known fact that the novels in the Victorian era were published serially and not in one big volume as it is published today. Reading the novel in serialized form was easier for the reading population since they did not have to pay more at a time to read a particular work. They could buy a magazine with only a few shillings and read the published part of the novel. So, the success of the novel form is attributed to newspapers and magazines as well since it was in this era of newspaper and magazine that novel as a literary form became more popular.

15.3.1.3. Characteristics of the Victorian Novel

The novel was the most significant literary development of Victorian literature. The form's output had increased thousandfold. Never ever in any language or age did the novel appear in such numbers and with such perfection. The Victorian novel is such a literary development that it astonishes us with its rapidity and excellence. And as mentioned earlier, the novel was in the Victorian era what drama was in Elizabethan. The Victorian novel had totally harbingered the emergence and domination of a new literary form that would rule the literary taste of readers for centuries to come, and it is true that the novel still remains one of the most popular literary forms in the twentieth century. Its popularity has not diminished even after more than two hundred years of sheer literary dominance. In this section, we shall be looking at some of the characteristics of the Victorian novel.

15.3.1.3.1. Realism

Literature has always remained an integral aspect of human existence. We know that the literature produced a hundred and fifty years before the Victorian age was either classical or romantic. Adventurous, classical or romantic kind of literature prevailed in this period. But it was far removed from reality. The literature produced during the Victorian era, especially novels, was characterized by the spirit of realism. It was a departure from the idealism of the Romantic period. The romantic features of enthusiasm, passion, imaginations etc. declined in this period. Realism became the characteristic feature of the Victorian novel. It was a trend-setting phenomenon in the sense that it changed the way people looked at literature. Realism is the representation of men as they are, the expression of the plain, unvarnished truth without regard to ideals or romance.

The Victorian novel was realistic in nature in the sense that it brought the readers closer to real life by talking about plausible events. Most of the novels published during the Victorian era are not far from

reality but closer to it. The readers of such novels find it easy to relate to the events in the narrative. These narratives were about the common man and his struggles, which also happened to be the struggles of the lower-class people in society. These struggles usually included a character of lower-class trying to gain upward mobility in society. The Victorian novel shows a mirror to life in many such ways. It primarily represents life as it is and not as it ought to be. Its emphasis is on the here and now. The Victorian novel pays considerable attention to specific action and verifiable consequences. It evokes common actions, presents surface details and emphasizes the minor catastrophes of the middle-class population. It employs simple and direct language and writes about the issues of human conduct. The action was replaced by characterization since man was at the center of Victorian society. There was considerable attention to detail in the Victorian novels to give a crystal-clear picture of contemporary society. The ideals of the romantic age were incapable of representing the harsh realities of life and thus were replaced by the realist ideals of the Victorian age which underscored the smaller physical detail to represent the life not romantically but as it is. The novels of most of the Victorian novelists are laced with realism. Charles Dickens mastered the art of realistic representation in Victorian literature as most of his novels touches upon the realistic aspects of Victorian life. His novels acquaint the readers with prevalent social issues of contemporary Victorian life and society. His novels truly reflect the grim social realities of life by portraying characters caught in the havoc caused by the industrial revolution. *Oliver Twist* (1837-39), *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838-39), *Bleak House* (1852-53), *Little Dorrit* (1855-57), are some of his most famous novels that touch upon the prevalent social issues. William Makepeace Thackeray was also a major Victorian novelist to have written great novels that talk about serious social issues and bring the readers closer to the Victorian reality. Thackeray even says for himself, "I have no brains above my eyes; I describe what I see."

15.3.1.3.2. Morality or Moral Purpose

The middle-class Victorian society was governed by a set moral code. A certain code of conduct was to be followed by everyone. Morality was at the heart of every Victorian citizen. Truthfulness, economizing, duty, personal responsibility, and a strong work ethic were strongly regarded morals of the Victorian era. But contrasting to this was the world of factories and machines. Although the industrial revolution had changed the face of Victorian society in various ways, it also had many dark sides. The exploitation of the poor was one of the biggest problems that the industrial revolution had given rise to since factory owners worked the poor people in their factories for long hours, in poor working conditions and at low wages. This was strongly reflected in the novels of Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray, Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans). But these novelists also insisted upon the adherence to moral values in their novels. Morality was a characteristic feature of the Victorian novel and literature in general since the Victorian novel and literature departed from the purely artistic

standard of art for art's sake. The emphasis was on morality and moral values rather than artistic value in literature. The aim of Victorian novels and novelists was not to achieve artistic perfection in terms of form and language but to instruct the readers and teach them. The literature produced in this era, especially novels, was didactic in nature. Pleasing the readers was not the purpose of Victorian novelists. Their chief purpose was to teach the readers of English society the importance of moral values, and we find that this is well reflected in the writings of Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray, Elizabeth Gaskell, George Eliot and the Bronte sisters.

15.3.1.3.3. Serialization of Novels

Although this is not the characteristic of the Victorian novel, it is important to note that the novel in the Victorian era was not published the way it is published today: in one volume. It had become customary for novelists to publish the novel in parts or volumes. It was a convenient method both for the novelist and the readers since the novelist could write a part of the full novel and publish it before finishing the other, and the readers could read that part of the novel with paying only a few shillings rather than paying for the full volume at a time. Most monthly part issues sold for about one shilling, meaning the cost of a novel could be spread out over a year and a half. Throughout the Victorian era novels in serial parts were published in abundance in newspapers and magazines. The newspapers and magazines were popular forms of daily and monthly literature in the nineteenth century and it was because of these two powerful mediums that novel as a literary genre rose to new heights. Charles Dickens, who is considered the greatest Victorian novelist, published most of his novels in the serial form. Serialization made it easy for the novel to be read by the maximum number of readers.

15.3.1.3.4. Social Problem Novels

The Victorian novels can also be categorized as 'Social Problem Novels' because of its social significance. These Social Problem Novels are also known as "industrial", "social" or "condition-of-England" novels. "The condition of England" was a phrase used by Thomas Carlyle in his essay *Chartism* (1839) about the "condition and disposition" of working-class people. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, industrialization was a huge success. It had revolutionized the ways of living in various ways. The period was heading towards economic progress in the shadow of industrialization. Although the industrial revolution had bettered the lives of people by introducing machines and factories, it also had many dark sides to it in the sense that it had caused a great deal of damage to the Victorian society. One of the worst parts of the industrial revolution was child labor. It was a misfortune of the Victorian society that small children were worked in factories for long hours. Most children worked for 16 hours a day with only a forty-minute break in between. The evils of child labor are well reflected in the works of Charles Dickens as it is a well-known fact that Dickens himself had worked in factories when he was a small child since his father had been imprisoned for heavy debt in

Debtor's Prison. His novel *Oliver Twist* is centered around a small child in a workhouse.

Industrialization had also not spared women from its diabolical grip since women were also exploited like small children. They were also worked on low wages. The factory owners were also insensitive towards pregnant women as a report had appeared somewhere which reported: "We have repeatedly seen married females, in the last stage of pregnancy, slaving from morning to night beside these never-ending machines, and when . . . they were obliged to sit down to take a moment's ease, and being seen by the manager, were fined for the offense."

It was an age where people were worked in factories, on low wages and in poor working conditions. The working conditions were so disastrous that the workers often caught some serious health issues since they had to work in the factories without any protective gears which increased the chances of catching diseases. The factories had also adversely affected the environment by pollution. Rivers and other water resources were highly polluted which resulted in the spread of health issues among the population. The literature of the age, especially novels, is remarkable because it reflected such social problems caused by the industrial revolution. The Victorian novelists are fundamental to the canon of Victorian literature because of their excellence in portraying such social or industrial problems caused by the industrial revolution.

15.3.1.3.5. Women Novelists

The Victorian era was an era of new progress and development not only in the economic, industrial, social or political sphere but also in literature. Literature saw the emergence of a new kind of writing in this era which was women's writing. Women's writing existed even in earlier ages also but it was the time when women's writing was not taken seriously. The literary canon was completely under the dominance of male writers. Even publishers were not showing enough interest in the works of female authors because of the preconceived notion that their writing was trivial and silly, and that nobody would purchase books written by female authors. It was precisely because of this that the earlier ages failed in featuring the works of women writers. But the whole picture of women's writing was about to change in the Victorian age. Jane Austen had already set the tone for the Victorian women novelists to try their hands at novel and excel in novel writing. Victorian age witnessed the rise of some of the biggest figures of women's writing. The women novelists that emerged in this age completely broke away from the male novelists of the age and created a separate identity of their own. Charlotte Bronte, George Eliot, Emily Bronte, Anne Bronte and Elizabeth Gaskell are the most important women novelists of the age. The three Bronte sisters were often known as "stormy sisterhood" since they took the Victorian society by storm through their writing. For the first time in the history of English literature, there emerged a kind of writing that allowed women to express themselves on a global level through literature. The novels of these women novelists were centered on the everyday life of women in the Victorian era. For the first time, the focus of literature had

shifted to domestic life since women were mostly confined between the four walls of their houses. As George Eliot says, the novels written by women novelists were considered "silly" because it was believed that women's writing had no literary importance and value. George Eliot was the male pseudonym used by the woman novelist Mary Ann Evans. She used the pseudonym of George Eliot to write and publish her novels because she thought that her writing would not be taken seriously if she used her real name, and it was because of this that she kept on writing and publishing her novels under the male pseudonym to create the impression that the novels were written by a male novelist. Charlotte Bronte is known for her novel *Jane Eyre*. Elizabeth Gaskell is known for her *North and South* for depicting the contrasting lives of the rich and the poor in England. Emily Bronte is known for her gothic novel *Wuthering Heights* whereas Anne Bronte is known for *The Tenant of the Wildfell Hall*. These women novelists made significant contributions to the development of the novel form, and they were the ones who began the great tradition of women's writing in the novel form.

15.3.1.3.6. Science Fiction Novels

Science had already made its mark in the Victorian era. There was a shift towards scientific thought and inquiry. The society began to question the long prevalent aspects of society. The spirit of doubt and questioning cropped up in the minds of people. As we have seen before, it was also an age of a variety of scientific developments. The year 1859 was remarkable because of Charles Darwin's landmark scientific literary work *On the Origin of Species* which profoundly affected the minds of people regarding religion, human birth and existence and the role of religion in human life. Besides, the age was also remarkable for the various developments in medical science. Literature was also not much far away from scientific representation in the Victorian era as the late Victorian period saw the emergence of a totally different kind of literary writing: science fiction. Herbert George Wells (H. G. Wells) began writing in the late Victorian period and excelled the art of writing science fiction. He had mastered the art of science fiction to such an extent that he was once referred to as 'the Shakespeare of Science Fiction.' He is the founder of the science fiction genre. His novels are called 'Science Fiction' because most of his novels have the elements of science and scientific experiments. These elements of science and scientific experiments are not secondary but dominant features of his novels. The protagonists of Wells' novels engage in some kind of scientific experiment which transforms him into an abnormal creature. *The Invisible Man* (1897) is about one such protagonist name Griffin who drinks a potion he made for himself through scientific experiments that made him invisible. *The Time Machine* (1895) was also a famous science fiction novel by H. G. Wells that popularized the concept of time travel. The plot of the novel revolves around the concept of time travel by using a vehicle or device to travel purposely and selectively forward or backwards in time. The protagonist of the novel is a scientist who invented a time travel device and to test the device he takes a ride of it and comes to realize that

he has stopped in 802,701 A.D. in time. The events that follow this show the protagonist and his struggles with the people living in that time. *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896) and *The War of the Worlds* (1898) are two of his other science fiction novels that became very popular on its publication. H. G. Wells' science fiction novels are works of classics as they are popular even today and read by millions of people.

15.3.2. The Victorian Poetry

It is true that the Victorian age was emphatically an age of prose and novel but poetry was not less significant in this period. The period has also produced some of the greatest poets of English literature besides great novelists. Though the age is known for its rich tradition of novels and novelists, it is also known for its poets like Alfred Lord Tennyson, Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barret Browning. The Victorian poetry departs from the poetic tradition set by the romantics. The romantic poets were more inclined to nature and country life and whereas the Victorian poets have shown faith in human life and society. Like the Victorian novel, the poetry of the age also finds its interest in contemporary Victorian society. There is a strong inclination towards Victorian people and their lives.

15.3.2.1. Realism

The Victorian Poetry doesn't differ much from the Victorian novel in terms of its overall theme and subject matter. The Victorian age was an age of significant changes brought mainly by the industrial revolution. The industrial revolution had many dark sides to it since it introduced pathetic conditions of working and living to the society. The Victorian novel as discussed above had reflected these pathetic consequences of the industrial revolution. But Victorian poetry also came forward to discuss the contemporary Victorian human society and life. The poetry of this age departed from the idealistic standards of romantic age and shifted its focus to the realistic representation. The poems written by Tennyson were rich in its social and realistic representation.

15.3.2.2. Focus on Urban Life

The romantic poetry was known for its depiction of the rural and country life. It was more inclined towards nature and its representation. The romantic poets turned to nature and rural life primarily to find solace from the harsh realities of the industrial revolution. The poetry of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats and Byron feature some aspects of nature. But the Victorian poetry drifted away from this and reflected the newly developed city life. The industrial revolution had given rise to new cities. These cities were immensely populated. The huge population gave rise to new slums. The living conditions deteriorated, and the Victorian poetry reflected this deterioration. The Victorian poets mastered the art of depicting city life in their poetry.

15.3.2.3. Pessimism

Pessimism is the defining feature of Victorian poetry. The standards of living had deteriorated because of the industrial revolution. The increase in slums was giving rise to new diseases. There was poverty, unemployment, corruption, disease, deaths etc. The poetry of the age discussed the pathetic lives of these people and thus had a note of pessimism. Tennyson and many other poets mourn the death of traditional English life. Matthew Arnold's *Dover Beach* is one such pessimistic poem that mourns the arrival of the modern way of life.

15.3.2.4. Questioning the God

The Victorian society began to question God on many prevalent aspects. The spirit of doubt and questioning developed among the Victorians, and the poetry of this age succeeds in representing this new spirit. Tennyson, the Browning couple, Matthew Arnold and many other poets wrote poems concerning the Victorian spirit of doubt and questioning. Their poems reflected the newly developed tendency of people questioning the God, religion and Church, and the corruption of the priests.

15.3.2.5. Social Reform

It is a well-known fact that the industrial revolution began in the age when Wordsworth and Coleridge were at the top of their business. The society was changing rapidly since cities were growing in number and the industrial revolution had started showing its impacts, both positive and negative. In order to move away from the deteriorating society, Wordsworth, Coleridge and other romantic poets found solace in rural and country life. They began appreciating nature and not the growing city life. But it was in the Victorian era that poetry began to represent urban life. Rather than turning their heads against poor urban life, the Victorian poets began to confront it and talk about it in their poetry. They took the task of social reform through poetry. Thus, the poetry of the age was becoming more and more social in its appeal to the readers.

15.3.2.6. Dramatic Monologue

Dramatic monologue is a narrative device in which a person or character speaks for a longer period of time. Robert Browning is often considered the master of this form of writing. His dramatic monologues are so perfect that he presents the whole thought process of his fictional characters before the audience or the readers. The technique of dramatic monologue allowed Browning to explore the minds of his characters and reveal it before his audience in a subtle manner. His monologues are special also because of his treatment of contemporary social and religious problems of the day, particularly domestic abuse and religious hypocrisy. His dramatic monologues were so perfect that it influenced the writings of many later day poets like W. B. Yeats, Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot.

15.3.3. The Victorian Prose

Prose as a literary medium emerged in the eighteenth century. The age of Pope or Enlightenment age became the age of prose because of the significant advancements that facilitated the growth of prose. But prose in the Victorian age had a separate identity when compared to earlier prose writings. The prose in the romantic age and eighteenth century saw the rise of the personal essay. The prose writers provided their personal accounts of different things. But Victorian prose differed from earlier prose writing in the sense that it shifted from personal essays to social criticism. The prose writers unlike the earlier one began to write about the prevalent social scenarios. They focused their writing on social issues of the day also providing their personal commentaries on that. In a way, they took the task of social reform through prose because prose as a literary medium was read by a greater number of people in the Victorian age as compared to the verse form of poetry. The prose of the age included didactic essays and social commentaries on politics, society and environment. There were historical tracts as well since an increasing number of writers were attempting historical writing. The prose of the age also included a lot of polemical writings on various social issues including the plight of the working class. Thomas Carlyle is one of the most prominent prose writers of the age chiefly known for his *Life of Schiller* (1825), *Sartor Resartus* (1836), and *French Revolution* (1837). His work *Past and Present* (1843) was inspired by the critical social and industrial conditions of the day. John Ruskin was also a significant prose writer of the age. He is known for his prose works like *Modern Painters* (1843), *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849), *The Stones of Venice* (1851-53) and *The Two Paths* (1859). In most of his writing career, he was occupied with architecture and painting and not with literary arts. His works mentioned above are about the architecture of those times. He was later found to have shifted to social writing also. *Unto this Last* (1860) is one of his most popular works and it is often said that Mahatma Gandhi was highly inspired by this work. The age was also remarkable because of the writings of Thomas Babington Macaulay who was far more popular than Carlyle and Ruskin in his own lifetime. It is said for him that “even his purely literary essays have been widely read by persons who as a rule never think of reading criticism.” Macaulay was a legal advisor to Supreme Council in India. He is famous for his work *Macaulay’s Minutes of 1835*, which laid a very strong foundation for the establishment of formal English education in India. He is best known for his work *History of England from the Accession of James II* (1848). Besides Carlyle, Ruskin and Macaulay, there were numerous other prose writers in the Victorian era. The Victorian prose was not limited in reach since it was read by a large number of people. These writings were published in newspapers and magazines and thus it was easy for the writers to reach the maximum number of readers since newspapers and magazines were popular means of reading in those days.

• CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-1

Answer the following questions:

1. The period from _____ is known as the Victorian age.

2. The Great Exhibition of 1851 was housed in a special building called _____.
3. The Crystal Palace was designed by an English architect named _____.
4. Which of the following was not one of the aims of the Chartist Movement?
 - a) No property qualifications to be an MP.
 - b) Electoral districts of equal size.
 - c) The use of secret ballot to protect the elector in the exercise of his vote.
 - d) Voting rights to women.
5. The Victorian literature was most remarkable for its development of the _____ form.

a) poetry	b) prose
c) novel	d) drama
6. Which of the following novelists cannot be considered as one of the precursors of the English novel?

a) Laurence Sterne	b) Samuel Richardson
c) Thomas Hardy	d) Henry Fielding
7. *Tristram Shandy* was written by _____.

a) Thomas Hardy	b) Laurence Sterne
c) Henry Fielding	d) Daniel Defoe
8. Robert Browning is well-known for his _____.

a) Psychological Realism	b) Focus of urban life
c) Dramatic Monologue	d) Idealism

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-2

Answer the following questions:

1. Discuss in brief the major literary characteristics of the Victorian age.

2. Write a note on the characteristics of Victorian novel.

3. What are the salient features of Victorian poetry?

15.4 LET US SUM UP

The Victorian era had a dream run not only in the social, industrial or political sphere but also in literature. The Great Industrial Revolution was one of the most significant events that took place during the era and totally altered the fabric of human society. This industrial revolution had given rise to the Great Exhibition of 1851 which displayed the newly gained industrial strength of Britain. The age was also remarkable for its spirit of science and scientific developments. There was the Chartist Movement of 1838 also which enfranchised the working class. But besides these significant changes, literature played a significant role in educating the masses and keeping them informed about the events. The rise of the novel form was the most prominent feature of the literature of this period. The great novelists of the age mastered the art form and laid the foundation for the novel form to develop further in the hands of later day novelists. The novel as a literary form was so dynamic in the Victorian era that it could talk about any possible subject matter. Social reform was necessarily required and the novelists of the age used novel as a tool to bring about the reform. Most of the novels in this age were centered around social reform since the great industrial revolution had caused great damage to society as a whole. The poetry and prose of the age were also not behind in making their marks in the canon of Victorian literature since the poets and other writers of the age made profound contributions to the literature of the age. It was so remarkable that literature excelled in a machine age. The Victorian age thus became the age not only of industrial dominance but also of literary.

15.5 KEY WORDS

- Literature: written works, especially those considered of superior or lasting artistic merit.
- Monologue: a long speech by one actor in a play or film, or as part of a theatrical or broadcast programme.
- Profound: (of a state, quality, or emotion) very great or intense.
- Canon: a general law, rule, principle, or criterion by which something is judged.

15.6 BOOKS SUGGESTED

1. A Compendious History of English Literature by R.D. Trivedi
2. English Literature by W. J. Long
3. A History of English Literature by Edward Albert

ANSWERS:

1) 1837-1901 2) The Crystal Palace 3) Richard Paxton 4) d) Voting rights to women 5) c) novel 6) c) Thomas Hardy 7) b) Laurence Sterne 8) c) Dramatic Monologue

UNIT 16

MAJOR AUTHORS AND LITERARY WORKS OF THE VICTORIAN AGE

STRUCTURE

16.0 Objectives

16.1 Introduction

16.2 Novelists

16.2.1 Charles Dickens

16.2.2 William Makepeace Thackeray

16.2.3 Bronte Sisters

16.2.4 George Eliot

16.2.5 George Meredith

16.3 Poets

16.3.1 Alfred, Lord, Tennyson

16.3.2 Robert Browning

16.3.3 Elizabeth Barrett Browning

16.3.4 Mathew Arnold

16.3.5 Dante Gabriel Rossetti

16.4 Let Us Sum Up

16.5 Key Words

16.6 Books Suggested

Answers

16.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this unit are:

1. To discuss the overview of the Victorian Age in brief
2. To discuss major novelist of the Victorian Age
3. To discuss major poets of the Victorian Age

16.1 INTRODUCTION

The period from 1837 to 1901 is considered as The Victorian Age as it was under the reign of Queen Victoria. The reign of Queen Victoria transformed the Great Britain from predominantly rural, agricultural society into urban and industrial one. It was the era where new technologies like railways and steam printing press were introduced. The

Victorians were moving to an evangelical and atheist ideology from being conservative and religious. It was the time of rapid change. The common or working class, women and coloured people raised their voices to get the rights to vote, safe workplaces, sanitary reforms and universal education. These debates, values and cultural concerns are well reflected in the literature of this period. The Victorian literature differed from the eighteenth century and romantic period literatures in terms of its audience as in earlier ages the audience used to be a special and an elite class. But due to the great industrial revolution there emerged a new class of people altogether: the middle class. The newly developed readership of the middle class resulted in the prosperity of Victorian literature. The invention of printing press attracted more readers as it made the printing affordable. The invention of railroads made it easy for the producers to export it to more audiences across the globe.

Succeeding the era of romantic revival, Victorian age had its unique literary features. The Victorian period includes the features like morality, revolt, intellectual developments, new education, international influences etc. It is considered as a combination of sentimental and pragmatist way of writing. Though the Victorian Age witnessed two extraordinary artists, Alfred Lord Tennyson and Robert Browning, the age is additionally exceptional for the greatness of its prose writing. It was for the first time that the novel as a literary form became popular.

With all its enormous creation, the age witnessed no incomparable author. It uncovered no Shakespeare, no Shelley, nor (in the global sense) a Byron or a Scott. The overall literature was profound in the sense that it portrayed the harsh realities of society. The Victorian age was incredibly beneficial of high quality literary work, at the same time, besides in the novel, the measure of true innovation is in no way, shape or form extraordinary. Authors were when in doubt substance to work upon previous models, and the upgrades they accomplished were frequently questionable and insignificant.

Although the age has witnessed so many marvelous authors and poets, here we will discuss about the major authors who played a significant role in this age. The literary writers can be divided into two parts i.e. novelist and poets. Some major poets include Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-92), Robert Browning (1812-89), Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-61), Mathew Arnold (1822-88), Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-82). Some major novelists the age has witnessed are Charles Dickens (1812-70), William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-63), The Bronte sisters (Charlotte Bronte (1816-55), Emily Bronte (1818-48) and Anne Bronte (1820-49)), George Eliot (1819-80) and George Meredith (1828-1909).

- **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-1**

Q.1 What are the literary features of the Victorian age?

Q.2 Which literary form was introduced in the Victorian age?

Q.3 Who were the major poets of the Victorian Age?

Q.4 Who were the major novelist of the Victorian Age?

16.2 NOVELISTS

16.2.1 Charles Dickens (1812-70)

Charles John Huffman Dickens (7 February 1812 – 9 June 1870) was an English novelist and a critic. Some of the most famous fictional characters have been produced by him which made him one of the famous authors of the Victorian era. His works delighted in extraordinary fame during his lifetime and, by the twentieth century, Scholars and critics had remembered him as a genius literary writer. His books and short stories are still broadly read today. His works portray the harsh reality of the society. Victorian era is known for the developments. Charles Dickens tells the story of oppression behind these developments. Although Dickens' novels were written during the Victorian period, it is still relevant in the current era. He wrote more than a dozen novels, short-stories which includes the theme of Christmas, ghost and children. Along with that he had written some plays and nonfiction books, essays and articles. His novels initially serialized in some magazines and later it was printed in the book form.

Charles Dickens' major works include *Pickwick Papers* (1836-37), *Oliver Twist* (1837-39), *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838), *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840), *A Christmas Carol* (1843), *David Copperfield* (1850), *Bleak House* (1853), *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), *Great Expectations* (1861) and *Our Mutual Friend* (1865). All his works award him popularity than any other author of his time. His quality of work attracts and interests not only the sophisticated class but also to the simple class, not only the queen but also the poor. This quality of work as well as technological developments helps him to get a worldwide fame very quickly.

Charles Dickens' first published novel was *Pickwick Papers* (1836-37). The story is about an innocent, naïve and a decent natured protagonist, Mr. Pickwick and his adventures. Pickwick recruits the streetwise Sam Weller in the way, and he assists them in surviving. This book is built on his earlier Sketches by Boz to launch him to fame and is now one of the most famous works. It is full of fun and captures the high spirited spirit of the young Dickens. *Oliver Twist* (1837-1839) is a satirical humor. It has the theme which exposes the cruelty of the society for the children. Abusiveness and corruption towards the children in the form of child labour is portrayed in the novel which also shows the harsh reality of the Victorian society. *Oliver Twist* is the second major novel of Charles Dickens. It is the story about the Oliver Twist, an orphan, who is a survivor of the suffering and torture of the criminals and some authorities from government officials. *Nicholas Nickleby* is the third novel written by Charles Dickens. The plot is about the protagonist Nicholas Nickleby. His family becomes poor after his father's death due to loss of money in an investment. Nicholas' remarkable success after a tough start is a tale that would connect to a broad audience.

The Old Curiosity Shop was published in a weekly serial Master Humphrey's Clock from 1840 to 1841. The plot revolves around the girl named Nell Trent and her grandfather; both living in the Old Curiosity Shop in London. The novel became so popular that Queen Victoria found it very interesting and cleverly written. The death of Little Nell is considered as one of the most remarkable scenes in the works of Dickens. *A Christmas Carol* is the first book of five books written on Christmas by Dickens in 1940, it is one of the most remarkable works of Dickens. It depicts Ebenezer Scrooge's transition from a tightfisted grumpy old man to a compassionate and honest man. This is triggered by a Christmas haunting and dreams that remind him of happy times, show the benevolent heart of those in adversity, and terrify him with dire consequences if he does not change his ways. *Dombey and Sons* was published in 1846-48. The pride and cold-hearted impertinence of Mr. Paul Dombey Senior, a businessman, pervade this job. Having followed the demise, he places all of his expectations in Paul, their only son, thus neglecting Florence, their daughter. Dombey marries again, but his will is thwarted by courageous strength and treachery, and he starts to lose his fortune. Finally, he had the love of his daughter, who assisted him throughout.

David Copperfield was published in 1848-1850 in the form of series and later in 1850 in book form. This partly autobiographical novel, told in the first person, is widely regarded as his best work. Mr Wilkins Micawber, who resembles Dickens' father in certain ways, is one of the most unforgettable characters. *Bleak House* was published in the form of series with 20 episodes in 1852-1853. This plot is based on a lengthy court dispute surrounding the distribution of an estate, which results in wretchedness and misery for the parties but considerable benefit for the attorneys. Inspector Bucket and Esther Summerson, a talented detective, are unforgettable characters. There are a lot of mysteries in this novel, as well as a murder and some detectives.

His novel *A Tale of Two Cities* was published in 1859. One more historical novel by Dickens, this one is set during the French Revolution, with London and Paris as the two cities. Charles Darnay, a Frenchman who has settled in London, returns to Paris to save his agent's life, only to be sentenced to death himself. Sydney Carton jumped replaced him and saved his life. Carton's words at the novel's conclusion are well-known: "*It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known.*"

Great Expectation, Dickens' one of the most well known and remarkable work, was published in 1860-61 similarly in the form of series. The story is told in the first person by the narrator, Philip Pirrip, also known as Pip, and traces him from his youth in the possession of a cruel sister and her kindly partner, a blacksmith, to leading the life of a gentleman in London with the aid of an enigmatic benefactor. Miss Havisham is a major figure in his life.

Our Mutual Friend, first published in 1864-65 in the form of series, is a work of art that exemplifies his extraordinary craftsmanship. *Our Mutual Friend* tells the storey of John Harmon, who claimed to be someone else before he developed an impression of Bella Wilfer, the woman he is expected to marry under his father's will. Despite plenty of other problems, all worked out in the end.

Dickens is a promoter of art for the sake of society. His work is purposeful art. Dickens' interests did not stop with "aesthetic culture" or "Gothicism." His books have a definite humanitarian bent to them. He is regarded as one of the most important social reformers of his day. The bulk of his books are based around a social topic. For Example, "The delay in laws is uncovered in *Bleak House*; *Nicholas Nickleby* uncovers the sadism of schoolmasters and the abuses of charitable schools; theme of political economy is portrayed in *Hard Times*. Dickens does not say everything is alright with the world but he does not say everything is wrong with the world either.

16.2.2 William Makepeace Thackeray (July, 1811 – Dec., 1863)

William Makepeace Thackeray, a British novelist, was born in 1811 in Calcutta, India. In 1815, his father died and his mother married an engineering officer in 1817. He was sent to England after his father's death. Thackeray and his mother reconciled in 1820. William Makepeace Thackeray studied from Trinity College, Cambridge. He left college without degree. He also studied law and then moved to painting as a profession.

Although Thackeray had written a lot of works his most prominent and well known work is *Vanity Fair* (1848). Initially it was published as monthly serial from 1847 to 1848, having the subtitle *Pen and Pencil Sketches of English Society*. Later it was published as a novel in 1848. The work is a satire on English society. *Vanity Fair* is considered as one of the most remarkable works of Victorian era. The title is taken from John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678). *Vanity Fair* in *Pilgrim's Progress* refers to a place where pilgrims used to stop during their

journey to the pilgrimage. It was a never ending fair in the village Vanity which represents the sinful materialistic attachment of man.

Vanity Fair, subtitled *A Novel without a Hero and Pen and Pencil Sketches of English Society*, is the only novel with two subtitles. The plot of the novel revolves around a puppet play performed at a fair. The narrator of the novel appears several times as a writer and a manager. The story is about two Becky (Rebecca Sharp) and Amelia (Emmy Sedley). The *Vanity Fair* is a realistic satire on Victorian society which shows how it gets consumed by the desire of social mobility and wealth. The major themes of *Vanity Fair* consist of selfishness, illusion and reality, heroism. *Vanity Fair* is considered as the only major work of William Makepeace Thackeray which brings him fame and success. The other work of William Makepeace Thackeray *The History of Pendennis*, shares the same method like *Vanity Fair*, portrays life with a view point of the author. The other minor works of Thackeray includes *The History of Henry Esmond* (1852), *The New Comers* (1853-55) and *The Virginians* (1857-59).

William Makepeace Thackeray was the first editor of The Cornhill Magazine for which he wrote *Lovel the Widower* (1860), *The Adventures of Philip* (1861-62). He also wrote Essays in the form of series, witty and charming trivials, *The Roundabout Papers* (1860-63). These novels were inferior in terms of merit and size than the previous remarkable novels. His left an unfinished novel named *Denis Duval* at the time of his death. Lectures, just like Charles Dickens, bring him more success where he did not follow the methods of Dickens as lecturer.

16.2.3 The Bronte's Sisters (Charlotte Bronte (1816-1855), Emily Bronte (1818-48) and Anne Bronte (1820-49))

Bronte sisters were born in Yorkshire to an Irish Clergyman, Patrick Bronte. Charlotte Bronte became a school teacher and then a governess due to the financial crisis of the family. In 1842 she shared a visit to Brussels with Emily. When she returned to home she has to live with the family which compelled her to live as per the family's conventions. Her success in books made her free from the financial crisis. In 1854 she got married and died in the next year. Her two sisters died before.

Bronte's became the aspect of the Romantic Movement which had changed English poetry at the initial stage of the century. It was first felt in the novel. They became the pioneers of literature of the Romantic Movement's feature dealing with the revealing of the human spirit. Despite of detached observation of group of people or society, as it is portrayed in Jane Austen and the earliest authors, they portrayed trauma and suffering of an individual character. Apart from that Bronte also significantly presented the character of female protagonist with the strength of immense courage and passion. Their writings are as much about the creativity and passions as they are about the mind, and some of their most vital passages center on poetry.

Charlotte Bronte

Charlotte Bronte's first novel, *The Professor*, did not succeed to get a publisher. Then it was published posthumously in 1857. It portrays experiences of her own life in a passionless manner, Character lacks passionate understanding and the story is less appealing. *Jane Eyre* (1847) is the most remarkable novel of Charlotte Bronte. It presents a new English fiction as the love story of the simple but very vital protagonist is revealed with detailed understanding and very naïve truthfulness. The story is weak in nature. It has full of dubiousness and sometime melodramatic but the central characters are deeply pondered which gives a feeling of sheer terror throughout the novel. *Shirley* (1849), her next novel, is again the love story of a young girl. As in the earlier work it also has the weak plot. She represents simpler and less dispassionate portrayal of life. In *Villette* (1853), she recalls her experiences in life through the character Lucy Snowe. She represents herself in the form of the Lucy Snowe.

Though Charlotte's work has weak plot as she is limited to her own experiences, her humor decreases the seriousness of the plot. Charlotte's work is filled with passion which at certain point increases to a high level. Indeed she is a genius and her work is indisputable. Her passion and energy she has put into her novels allow the common class people to feel the exquisite beauty of romantic world.

Emily Bronte

Emily Bronte was the greatest among the Bronte sisters. She did write more than Charlotte. Her most remarkable and well known work is *Wuthering Height* (1847). It is considered as the unique work in the history of English literature. It represents the essence of the bleak, wild moors. Its core characters are conceived in vast proportions, and their impulses possess an elemental energy that propels them into the realms of poetry. The novel's sustained intensity is brought to almost incredible heights of emotion in a sequence of climaxes, portrayed with a sharp, unflinching realism.

Emily Bronte also wrote some poems in which few were of high level and majority of poems lack class. Her poems uncover her strength of being courageous and passionate. Her remarkable poems include *No Coward Soul is Mine* and *Cold in the earth- and the deep snow piled above thee*.

Anne Bronte

Anne Bronte was the youngest one among the three Bronte sisters. She is least significant of the three. She wrote two novels *Agnes Grey* (1847) and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848). Both of her novels lack intensity and power which make them inferior to her sisters.

16.2.4 George Eliot (1819-80)

George Eliot is a pen name used by Mary Ann Evans. George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans), daughter of Land agent in a Warwickshire, born near Nuneaton. She studied from Nuneaton and Coventry. She was fond of religious and philosophical speculation. Eliot translated *Life of Jesus* in 1846. After his father's death in 1849 she jumped into the field of literary

work. She secured the position of assistant editor and then became a member of a literary circle. In her later life she travelled extensively before her marriage. She married to J. W. Cross in 1880. After her marriage she died in the same year.

During the middle years of her life she found her interest in fiction writing. Her first work was the collection of three short stories which was published in 1857 in Blackwood's Magazine. After a year it was republished under the title of *Scenes of Clerical Life*. It explores the tragedy in lives of ordinary people, uncovers with an enormous empathy and clear insight into the reality of character. *Adam Bede* published in 1859 is the work which constituted her image as writer with an immense caliber. It reflects the picture of Victorian life among the sophisticated and common classes. The plot revolves around the character Hetty, and the murder of her child. The novel is remarkable for the portrayal of its characters. The significant characters of the novel include Mr. Poyser, Hetty and Adam Bede himself. *The Mill on the Floss* was published in 1860. This work is considered as one of the best work written by her. It is autobiographical in nature. The plot revolves around the tragedy of two characters named Maggie and Tom Tulliver. The story is set in sophisticated rural background. The character of Maggie acknowledges her profound understanding of human personality. The work is simple in style and most of the part is poetical. *Silas Marner: the Weaver of Ravelope* was published 1861. It was a shorter novel. The novel portrays the essence of village life. This work, like her previous novel, is a tragedy. The novel also has the content of humour. The melodramatic ending make it dissipated like the earlier work *The Mill on the Floss*.

Till the production of these works the essence of ethical interest lack in the novels of George Eliot. The next phase of her work represents the essence of ethical interest which makes it dominating the other novels. Set in medieval Florence, Italy the novel uncovers the story of Romola. The novel lacks the note of innateness which is most remembered for its study of deterioration in the character of Tito Melema. *Felix, Holt the Radical* was published in 1866. It is included in the list of minor works. The other minor works include *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life* published in 1871-72. *Daniel Deronda*, her last novel, was published in 1876. In this novel, which is less novel and more like dissertation, she portrays her tendencies with the moral problems. Though it presents few fine scenes it is almost entirely devoid of the lighter touches that marked her earlier work. The *Impressions of Theophrastus Such*, collection of essays, was published in 1879.

George Eliot is a prominent writer in the history of English literature. Her study of human psychology to understand the human problems, relationship with outer forces and to dwell into the realms of inner consciousness changed the future of English novel. The concept of realism portrayed in most of George Eliot's work became the one of the significant features in the rapid developments in English literature. After her death her reputation was declined but surprisingly her works regained her reputation during the last decades.

16.2.5 George Meredith (1828-1909)

George Meredith, born at Portsmouth in 1828, is one of the most significant authors of the Victorian era. He completed his education in Germany. He left study of law and jumped into the field of writing and chose it as a profession. Earlier he contributed to newspapers and magazines. He was of the same ideology as some of his contemporary to participate in the struggle for freedom of Germany and Italy. He worked as a reader in London publishing house. Once his own works start creating an impression he became a fulltime writer. He was also a part time editor in *The fortnightly Review*. He died at Box Hill, Surrey.

The Ordeal of Richard Feverel was the first novel of significance. It was published in 1859. This novel has weak plot but as the story moves forward it becomes incredibly interesting till the end. The story revolves around the character of the educated young aristocrat who is the hardworking. His nature ends up in complications in his relationship with others. Majority of the characters belong to the elite class and portrayed well. As the story moves forward it presents the extraordinary language speaking by them like they belong to the characters of Oscar Wilde or Congreve. The language is extremely well elaborated which makes the reader difficult to understand. The novel is considered as the most remarkable among his all works.

Evan Harrington was published in 1861. It is partly autobiographical as it presents experiences of his family life. *Emilia in England* was published in 1864. The title was later changed to *Sandra Belloni*. Most of the setting of this work is in Italy. *Rhoda Fleming* was published in 1865. In this work Meredith endeavored to talk about plebian folk. As Meredith was very conscious about portraying heroine with the same important as the hero, in this work he portrayed the female character having a good position and reputation in aristocratic society. The next work *Vittoria* was published in 1867 which is the sequel of the earlier novel *Sandra Belloni*. It deals with insurrectionary movement held in Italy. *The Adventures of Harry Richmond* was published in 1871 which is set in England. *The Egoist* was published in 1879 in which Meredith has reached to the climax of his art. The style of the work is incredible, declined in the glitter he presented in his earlier work. The portrayal of characters is much accurate, close and appropriately detailed. It is a triumph of comic artistry. Meredith's later works are of less importance. His other works includes *The Tragic Comedians* (1880), *Diana of the Crossways* (1885), *One of our Conquerors* (1891) and *The Amazing Marriage* (1895). All of his later works were lack a good plot and over developed in style.

• CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-2

Answer the following questions:

1 Which of the following novel of Charles Dickens is autobiographical?

- A. David Copperfield
- B. Hard Times
- C. Pickwick Papers
- D. A Tale of Two Cities

2 Mr. Wilkin Micawber appears in which of the novel of Charles Dickens'?

- A. David Copperfield

- B. Hard Times
C. Pickwick Papers
D. A Tale of Two Cities
- 3 The Old Curiosity Shop was published in a weekly serial called _____?
- 4 The character of Miss Havisham appears in _____.
- A. The Great Expectations
B. David Copperfield
C. Bleak House
D. Pickwick Papers
- 5 In which town was Thackeray born?
- A. Calcutta
B. London
C. Delhi
D. Florence
- 6 Which of the following novel is called a "Novel without a hero"?
- A. Vanity Fair
B. Mill on the Floss
C. Pickwick Papers
D. Northanger Abbey
- 7 George Eliot's novel Romola is a
- A. Historical Novel
B. Religious Novel
C. Gothic Novel
D. Picaresque Novel
- 8 George Eliot was the pen name of?
- A. Mary Anne Evan
B. Mary Collisions
C. Lara Evans
D. None

16.3 MAJOR POETS

16.3.1 Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-92)

No English literary scholar and an admirer of poetry is unfamiliar with the name Alfred, Lord Tennyson. He was not only the most important literary figure of the Victorian period, but was also a poet of unrivalled genius. His remarkable keen sensibility for writing lyric and poetical narratives is fondly remembered today by the learners of English literature. His technique and methods for creating great poetry, place him among the greatest poets of English literature. Let's learn more about his life, significant works, and the importance of his writings.

Tennyson was born in Somersby, Lincolnshire, to a clergyman father. He was the fourth of George Clayton Tennyson's twelve children. Tennyson, like the era he lived in, possessed the eccentricities of everyday life. He

can as well be considered the spokesperson of Victorian era. He received his early education in Louth before moving to Cambridge in 1828. He was awarded the 'Chancellor's medal' at a young age for his first poetical work, *Timbuctoo*. Tennyson was a Cambridge dropout, and most of his early works reflected his mediocrity as a poet. He couldn't find his inner poetic voice until he moved to peaceful places like the Lake District and Stratford-on-Avon.

However, life started to throw obstacles at him, and the year 1844 was a year of unlucky events, as he lost most of his small fortune. But he obtained a government pension in 1845 shortly thereafter. In 1850, he was appointed Poet Laureate, succeeding Wordsworth. For almost two decades, he lived on the Isle of Wight. He was later made a baron after being designated to the House of Lords. Tennyson died in Aldworth and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Interestingly, Tennyson worked with his brother to compose a book of poetry when he was only seventeen years old, which was later published in 1827 under the title, *Poems by Two Brothers*. As previously mentioned, his subsequent amateurish poetry, such as *Timbuctoo*, published in 1829, and *Chiefly Lyrical*, published in 1830, lacked the craftsmanship of his later poetical masterpieces. With the passing of time, his personality evolved, as can be seen in the following volume, which was originally titled *Volumes of Poems* but is now known as *Poems*. *The Lady of Shalott*, *The Lotus Eaters*, and *The Palace of Art* were among the poems included. This collection of poems signalled his 'poetical' arrival and elevated him to the ranks of the greatest poets of all time. These poems are full of vivid images, picturesque landscapes, Victorian romances, and flawless execution.

The publication of Tennyson's much acclaimed long narrative poem, *The Princess*, in the year 1847 led to the founding of another critical phase of his literary career. *The Princess*, represented 'the new woman'. It had all of the elements of vivid imagination and beautifully carved details of the popular Tennysonian style. The poem is led by a powerful and unique saga of the imaginary ladies' academy with the intelligent and scholarly princesses, ends very conventionally with The Princess marrying the blameless hero in the end.

Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, which was written in 1850, represented the deeply rooted emotional side of his literary talent. It's described as a 'long series of meditations on the death of his close friend Arthur Henry Hallam, who died in Vienna'. This poem's elegiac nature showed intensely emotional features of Tennysonian poetry, which were adorned with elegant sketches of English scenery. *Maud and Other Poems*, published in 1855, set a different tone. The chief poems, such as 'monodrama,' included a string of verses with the themes of love and hate, optimism and desperation, and glorification of war and bloodshed. It is well known that Tennyson was enthralled by tales of Arthurian legend. It is noticeable in most of his poetical works. But, as a result of this fascination, *Idylls of the King*, a delicately illustrated and ornamented poetical work was published in a series in the years 1859, 1869, and 1879. The tale of a sea-man, entitled *Enoch Arden* (1864), includes a

descriptive depiction of a tropical island. Old age seems to be overpowering his poetical creativity in the latter part of his poetical career, as the poetry here has a darker tone. In shorter poetry like *Locksley Hall Sixty Years Later*, the tragic echoes can be heard.

Here we looked at Tennyson who we now know as a master of poetical craftsmanship, a champion at selecting unusual subject matter, and a pioneer in introducing pictorial qualities into the English poetry.

16.3.2 Robert Browning (1812-89)

Browning was the poet of extraordinary talent known for his philosophical, religious, and romantic writing. His poetical style covers everything from rhythmic and melodic arrangement to descriptive and obscure passages. His fondness for historical settings, and human abnormality is known to the literary world. His understanding of the 'human spirit' and 'human consciousness' is unparalleled. The detailed descriptions in his poetical works can be likened to the bright colours of a painting. His love lyrics and dramatic monologues are remembered with compassion even by the modern readers of English poetry. Let's learn more about his life, significant works, and the importance of his writings.

As per the historical evidences concerning Browning's life, he was born at Camberwell. His father was associated with the Bank of England. He was a 'decently-paid' clerk there. At a very young age, his family allowed young Robert to pursue education in unusual subjects, which liberated him as an individual. This is also well-reflected in his poetry, and dramatic works. Browning was heavily influenced by his predecessor Shelley. He only became acquainted with the leading figures of the literary and dramatic worlds during his stay in London. In 1845, he met Elizabeth Barrett, a celebrated poetess, they eloped and got married in a private ceremony soon after. He travelled to countries such as England, France, and Italy later in his life. He was awarded the degree of D.C.L. by the University of Oxford. He passed away in Italy and was laid to rest in Westminster Abbey.

The publication of *Pauline* in 1833 marked the beginning of his career as a poet. It was introspective in nature, and it seemed to be following the footsteps of Shellyan poetry. Browning considered Shelley to be his muse at the time, and had a great deal of appreciation and admiration for him. Later, in 1835, a work titled *Paracelsus* arose on the page, portraying the saga of its protagonist's "unquenchable desire for Knowledge." Its passages are written in blank verse. In the year 1837, he published his play *Strafford*, which was produced by the acclaimed actor Macready.

This piece was full of pathos and pointed to the interconnected facets of art and life. It's also regarded as one of Browning's most obscure works. Later, in his career the eight remarkable volumes published by him 1841 onward were compiled into this one volume called *Bells and Pomegranates*. It was published in the year 1846. This collection contains the lyrics, narrative poems, his six remarkable plays namely, *Pippa Passes*, *King Victor and King Charles*, *The Return of the Druses*, *A Blot on the 'Scutcheon*, *Colombe's Birthday*, *Luria*, and *a Soul's Tragedy*.

Browning attained perfection in his *Dramatic Lyrics* published in 1842, and *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics* in 1845. The scholars of English literature call him the master and propagator of dramatic monologues. His known works such as *The Italian in England*, *The Bishop orders his Tomb at Saint Praxed's*, and *Pictor Ignotus* were published in *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics*, whereas, *Dramatic Lyrics* mostly contained lyrical works like *Cavalier Tunes*. His happy marriage and companionship with his wife mostly reflect in his love lyrics. For instance, *Meeting at Night* depicts their sweet romance in full bloom.

Works like *Men and Women*, *Fra Lippo Lippi*, *Andrea del Sarto* and several others display Browning's talent at its best. The blank verse was used in abundance in his powerful compositions. Browning wrote one of his masterpieces, *Dramatic Personae*, in 1864. The remainder of Browning's long life witnessed the publication of works such as *Balaustion's Adventure*, *Fifine at the Fair*, *Red Cotton Night-Cap Country*, *The Inn Album* etc. The chapter in his literary career was powerfully concluded, with the publication of his *Asolando*, which depicts the tired and disillusioned old man, once in his firm and enthusiastic prime.

Here we looked at Browning who we now know as a master of dramatic monologues, a champion of writing inimitable love lyrics, and a pioneer in introducing dramatic monologues and verses in the literature of Victorian era.

16.3.3 Elizabeth Barret Browning (1806-1861)

Elizabeth Barret Browning, whose name before marriage was Elizabeth Barret, was born at Durham in 1806. At the early age of eight years she started writing poems. She suffered from intense pain in head and spine for the rest of her life after a severe illness at the age of 15. Later she went through lung disease, probably tuberculosis. Her medication of laudanum results in further health issues. John Kenyon, her cousin introduced her to the literary society. In 1838 her collection of poems was published. Her most of works published in between 1841 to 1844 which includes some prose and translation work. She contributed to the campaign "The Abolition of Slavery" and her writings emerged as a big influence in reformation in the child labour legislation. Browning was nominated along with Tennyson for the next poet laureate after the death of Wordsworth which made her the first female poet nominated for the award of poet laureate. Her work *Elizabeth's Volume Poems* which was published in 1844 was a great success which earned her the appreciation of Robert Browning. Later she married to Robert Browning in secret as they were scared of her father's disapproval. Elizabeth was disinherited by her father after the truth was revealed. The couple, in 1846, moved to Italy and there she spent rest of their life. Robert Wiedeman Barrett Browning, nickname Pen, was their only son. After her death Robert Browning published a collection of poems which was her last work. Her writings had a major influence on her contemporaries which also includes Edgar Allan Poe and Emily Dickinson. Her one of the most remarkable

and well known works are *How Do I Love Thee?* and *Aurora Leigh* which were published in 1845 and 1856 respectively.

Though she had written several works, here we will mention her important works. *An Essay on Mind; with Other Poems* was published in 1826. She did not write for almost nine years after her first work published. She returned with the *Prometheus Bound* which was published in 1833. Her other works worth mentioning are *The Seraphim and Other Poems* published in 1838, *Sonnets from the Portuguese* published in 1847, *Casa Guidi Windows* published in 1851, *Aurora Leigh* published in 1857, a poem written in blank verse, and *Last Poems* as mentioned above published by her husband shortly after her death in 1862.

16.3.4 Mathew Arnold (1822-88)

Mathew Arnold was born in December, 1822. His father was a headmaster in a rugby school. He is considered as the author of several activities, but significantly as critic and a poet that he holds a place in history of English literature. He was educated at Winchester, Rugby. He received the Newdigate Prize for poetry when he was studying in Balliol College, Oxford. He became inspector of a school in 1851 and there he proved his worth as an official with caliber. He resigned from the job in 1883, later started receiving pension from the government. After the span of five years he died of heart disease.

Matthew Arnold is one of the few great Victorian authors whose prestige is built on both his poetry and his poetry criticism. While he only dedicated a portion of his active life to poetry, much of the same beliefs, attitudes, and emotions reflected in his poems find a richer or more balanced expression in his prose. The regular assessments of his poetry as full of thoughts and aphoristic, or as elegiac or melancholy, and of his prose as instructive, urbane, and frequently satirically witty in its complete self mission of elevating England's social consciousness overshadowed this unity for most earlier readers.

As far as his poetical works are concerned they are not much bulky. Mathew Arnold is well known for his poem *Dover Beach*, but apart from this work he wrote several remarkable classical poems along with this. His first book of poetry *The Strayed Reveller, and Other Poems* was published in 1849. *Empedocles on Etna, and Other Poems* was published in 1852. Both the books of collection of poems appeared under the nom de plume of 'A'. His next work was *Poems* which was published in 1853 which includes its well known critical preface. *New Poems*, again a collection of poems, was published in 1867. Most of these works were shorter in size though Arnold succeeds in keeping the quality high. Arnold embraces classical themes as a subject, giving them a contemplative, even melancholy tone that is popular in modern works. In some of his poems, for instance *The Scholar Gypsy*, a nobly pessimistic poem, he is particularly good at describing traditional English scenery. He has most of the classic stateliness and more formal sort of elegance in his style, but he can still be elegant and friendly, with a note of genuine passion on occasion. In its subdued depressive resignation, his meditative

poetry reflects Gray's, yet all of his writing is meticulous, intellectual, and skilful.

His most remarkable and well known work includes *Dover Beach* published in 1867. It was a part of the *New Poems* which is a collection of poems. The poem was inspired by a white cliff of Dover Stand which he came across while his visit with his new wife to the south coast of England which was near to the coast of France about twenty two miles. As the poem reflects the theme of romantic love many critique consider it as a honeymoon poem. But the poem express the deep meaning of human's spiritual state and notion of happiness.

16.3.5 Dante Gabriel Rosseti (1828-82)

Dante Gabriel Rosseti was born in London. His father was an Italian refugee and professor of Italian in King's college. Rossetti completed his study from the same college where his father was working as professor. At the age of six he started writing poems and then moved to study painting at the Royal Academy School (1846). He was the prominent member of the Pre Raphaelite brotherhood with Holman Hunt, Ford Madox Brown, and the Painter Millais. He later became friend with Ruskin, William Morris and Swinburne. Ruskin became the financial support to him. He addicted to Chloral which had affected his health. At the time due to his addiction of Chloral his sanity was questionable in 1872. He died at Margate in 1882.

Rosseti was the eldest among all the Pre-Raphaelites. He was both a poet and a painter. He challenged the old conventions not only in poetry but in painting too. His poetical works are not large in size which includes only two poems namely *Poems* published in 1870 and *Ballads and Sonnets* published in 1881. There should be no doubt about the high quality of these poems. He would have found a position among the greatest if he had a bit more depth of view and perhaps a little more of the humane factor in him.

The Blessed Damozel, published in 1850, was perhaps the only well known work of Rossetti. It was published in the Pre-Raphaelite journal "The Gem". It was revised twice by Rossetti and later published in 1856, 1870 and 1873. The poem was influenced by Edgar Allan Poe's poem "The Raven," which portrays a lover mourning on Earth for the loss of his beloved. Rossetti preferred to depict the entire scenario in the opposite direction. The damozel observes her lover from heaven, and her unsatisfied desire for their reconciliation in heaven is described in the poem.

• CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-3

Answer the following questions:

1. Tennyson was awarded for the "Chancellor's Medal" for his which work?
 - A. Timbuctoo
 - B. The Lady of Shallot
 - C. The Lotus Eater
 - D. The Palace of Art

2. Which poem of Tennyson is a long series of meditations on the death of his close friend Arthur Henry Hallam?
- A. Timbuctoo
 - B. The Lady of Shalott
 - C. The Lotus Eater
 - D. In Memoriam
3. Pauline, published in 1833, was written by _____?
- A. Robert Browning
 - B. Tennyson
 - C. Rossetti
 - D. Arnold
4. Bells and Pomegranates, a volume of poems written by Robert Browning was published in ____.
- A. 1846
 - B. 1845
 - C. 1840
 - D. 1844
5. A poet worked in campaign "The Abolition of Slavery" and emerged as a big influence in reformation in the child labour legislation. Name the poet.
- A. Elizabeth Barrett Browning
 - B. Robert Browning
 - C. Tennyson
 - D. Arnold
6. Which two American poets had a great influence of Elizabeth Barrett Browning?
- A. Emily Dickinson and Edgar Allan Poe
 - B. Walt Whitman and Robert Frost
 - C. Sylvia Plath and Allen Ginsberg
 - D. Ezra Pound and T S Eliot
7. Scholar Gypsy is the poem written by
- A. Robert Browning
 - B. Arnold
 - C. Tennyson
 - D. Rossetti
8. Dover Beach is the most remarkable work of
- A. Arnold
 - B. Tennyson
 - C. Rossetti
 - D. Robert Browning

9. Along with Dante Gabriel Rossetti who were the members of Pre Raphaelite Poets?

- A. Robert Browning, Tennyson, Arnold
- B. Wordsworth, Coleridge, Lord Byron
- C. Holman Hunt, Ford Madox Brown, Painter Millais
- D. Elizabeth Barret Browning, Edgar Allen Poe, Emily Dickinson

10. The Blessed Demozel is the poem written by

- A. Dante Gabriel Rossetti
- B. Tennyson
- C. Arnold
- D. Browning

16.4 LET US SUM UP

Because literature was an accessible and pervasive part of Victorian society, studying it is crucial in understanding the attitudes and concerns of the people who lived during this era. Much of the writing during this time was a reaction to the rapidly changing notions of science, morality, and society.

16.5 KEY WORDS

- Era: a long and distinct period of history.
- Pervasive: present or noticeable in every part of a thing or place
- Nation: a large body of people united by common descent, history, culture, or language, inhabiting a particular country or territory.
- Reign: monarchy

16.6 BOOKS SUGGESTED

- 1) David Daiches. A Critical History of English Literature. Allied Publishers Pvt Ltd, 2005
- 2) Long, William J. English Literature. Atlantic Edition, 2015.

Answers

- **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-2**

1. David Copperfield
2. David Copperfield
3. Master Humphrey's Clock
4. The Great Expectations
5. Calcutta
6. Vanity Fair
7. Historical Novel
8. Marry Anne Evan

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-3

1. Timbuctoo
2. In Memoriam
3. Robert Browning
4. 1846
5. Elizabeth Barrett Browning

6. Emily Dickinson and Edgar Allan Poe
7. Arnold
8. Arnold
9. Holman Hunt, Ford Madox Brown, Painter Millais
10. Dante Gabriel Rossetti

STRUCTURE**17.0 Objectives****17.1 Introduction****17.2 Literary Terms****17.3 Key Words****17.4 Let Us Sum Up****17.5 Suggested Reading****17.6 Web References****Answers**

17.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit we shall

- Learn a few selected literary terms, along with their detail meaning.
- Learn about association of the terms discussed in this unit.

17.1 INTRODUCTION

This present unit defines and discusses terms that are commonly used to understand, classify, analyze, and interpret literature. The selected literary terms will definitely provide guideline for further reading of literature especially toward undergraduate students of English, and other literatures. However, these literary terms are proved to be a useful for advanced students, as well as for the general reader with literary interests.

17.2 LITERARY TERMS

1. Act and Scene: An act is one of the major divisions in the action of a play. In England, it was introduced by Elizabethan dramatists, who imitated ancient Roman plays by structuring the action into five acts. Acts are often subdivided into scenes, which in modern plays usually consist of units of action in which there is no change of place or break in the continuity of time. In the conventional theater with a proscenium arch that frames the front of the stage, the end of a scene is usually indicated by a dropped curtain or a dimming of the lights and the end of an act by a dropped curtain and an intermission.

2. Alliteration: It is the repetition of a speech sound in a sequence of nearby words. The term is usually applied only to consonants, and only when the re-current sound begins a word or a stressed syllable within a word.

3. Antihero: The chief person in a modern novel, whose character is widely discrepant from that which we associate with the traditional protagonist or hero of a serious literary work. The antihero is petty, ignominious, passive, ineffectual, or dishonest. The term "antihero," however, is usually applied to writings in the period of disillusion after the Second World War, beginning with such protagonists as we find in John Wain's *Hurry on Down* (1953) and Kingsley Amis' *Lucky Jim* (1954).

The antihero is especially conspicuous in dramatic tragedy, in which the protagonist had usually been of high estate, dignity, and courage. Extreme instances are the characters who people a world stripped of certainties, values, or even meaning in Samuel Beckett's dramas—the tramps Vladimir and Estragon in *Waiting for Godot* (1952).

4. Ballad: A ballad is a song, which is transmitted orally. Ballads are narrative techniques of folk songs, which originate, and are communicated orally. The initial version of a ballad was composed by a single author, but he or she is unknown; and since each singer who learns and repeats an oral ballad is apt to introduce changes in both the text and the tune, it exists in many variant forms. Many traditional ballads probably originated in the later middle age, they were not collected and printed until the eighteenth century, first in England, then in Germany. The basic modern collection is Francis J. Child's *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (1882-98), which includes 305 ballads, many of them in variant versions.

5. Biography: John Dryden defined biography as "the history of particular men's lives". Both the ancient Greeks and Romans produced short, formal lives of individuals. The eighteenth century in England is the age of the emergence of the full-scale biography, and also of the theory of biography as a special literary *genre*. In our own time biographies of notable women and men have become one of the most popular of literary forms, and usually there is at least one biographical title high on the bestseller list for example, *Steve Jobs* by Walter Isaacson.

6. Blank Verse: It consists of lines of *iambic pentameter* which are unrhymed. John Milton used blank verse for his epic *Paradise Lost* (1667). A large number of meditative lyrics, from the *Romantic Period* to the present, have also been written in blank verse, including Coleridge's *Frost at Midnight*, and Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey*.

7. Canon of Literature: The Greek word "kanon," suggesting a measuring rod or a rule, was extended to denote a list or catalogue, then came to be applied to the list of books in the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament which were designated by church authorities as the genuine Holy Scriptures. The term "canon" was later used in a literary application to signify the list of secular works accepted by experts as genuinely written by a particular author. The collection of essays edited by Robert

von Hallberg, *Canons* (1984); John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (1993); and Wendell V. Harris, *Canonicity, PULA, 106* (1991) are the examples of canons.

8. Character and Characterization: The character is the name of a literary *genre*; it is a short, and usually witty. The genre was inaugurated by Theophrastus, a Greek author of the second century B.C., who wrote a lively book entitled *Characters*. The books of characters then written by Joseph Hall, Sir Thomas Overbury, and John Earle influenced later writers of essays, history, and fiction. A character may remain stable or unchanged in outlook and disposition, from beginning to end of a work for example Prospero in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Micawber in Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield*, or may undergo a radical change, either through a gradual process of development or as the result of a crisis for example Shakespeare's *King Lear*, Pip in Dickens' *Great Expectations*. E. M. Forster, in his book *Aspects of the Novel* introduced popular new terms i.e flat and round characters. A flat character Forster says, is built around 'a single idea or quality' and a round character is presented in complex manner.

9. Chorus: Chorus was famous among the ancient Greeks. A group of people, wearing masks, who sang or chanted verses while performing dance like maneuvers at religious festivals Roman playwrights such as Seneca took over the chorus from the Greeks, and in the mid-sixteenth century some English dramatists imitated the Senecan chorus. The classical type of chorus was never widely adopted by English dramatic writers. During the Elizabethan Age the term "chorus" was applied also to a single person who spoke the prologue and epilogue to a play, and sometimes introduced each act as well.

Modern scholars use the term choral character to refer to a person within the play itself who stands apart from the action and by his comments provides the audience with a special perspective through which to view the other characters and events.

10. Conceit: It means a concept or image. English poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries adapted the term from the Italian 'conpetto'. There are two types of conceit.

- The Petrarchan conceit is a type of figure used in love poems that had been novel and effective in the Italian poet Petrarch, but became hackneyed in some of his imitators among the *Elizabethan* sonneteers. sonnet of Petrarch's translated by Wyatt begins with an oxymoron describing the opposing passions experienced by a courtly sufferer from the disease of love:

If find no peace; and all my war is done;
I fear and hope; I burn and freeze in ice.

- The metaphysical conceit is a characteristic figure in John Donne (1572-1631) and other metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century. It was described by Samuel Johnson, in a famed passage in his "Life of Cowley," (1779-81), as "wit" which is a kind of *discordia Concors*- a

combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike, the most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together.

10. Connotation and Denotation: In literary usage, the denotation of a word is its primary signification or reference; its connotation is the range of secondary or associated significations and feelings which it commonly suggests or implies. Example, 'home' denotes the house where one lives, but connotes privacy and intimacy that is the reason real estate agents like to use 'home' instead of 'house' in their advertisements. Poems typically establish contexts that bring into play some part of the connotative as well as the denotative meaning of words. In his poem "Virtue" George Herbert wrote,

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky.

11. Criticism: Criticism is the overall term for studies concerned with defining, classifying, analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating works of literature. Theoretical criticism proposes an explicit theory of literature, in the sense of general principles, together with a set of terms, distinctions, and categories, to be applied to identifying and analyzing works of literature, as well as the criteria by which these works and their writers are to be evaluated. Applied criticism, concerns itself with the discussion of particular works and writers; in an applied critique, the theoretical principles controlling the mode of the analysis, interpretation, and evaluation are often left implicit, or brought in only as the occasion demands. Impressionistic criticism attempts to represent in words the felt qualities of a particular passage or work, and to express the responses that the work directly evokes from the critic.

12. Drama: It is the form of composition designed for performance in the theater, in which actors take the roles of the characters, perform the indicated action, and utter the written dialogue. In poetic drama the dialogue is written in verse, which in English is usually *blank verse*. Almost all the *heroic dramas* of the English Restoration Period, were written in *heroic couplets*. A closet drama is written in dramatic form, with dialogue, indicated settings, and stage directions, but is intended by the author to be read rather than to be performed; examples are Milton's *Samson Agonistes* Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* (1820), and Hardy's *The Dynasts*.

13. Dramatic Monologue: A monologue is a lengthy speech by a single person. In a play, when a character utters a monologue that expresses his or her private thoughts, it is known as a soliloquy. The dramatic monologue has the following features. (1) A single person, who is patently *not* the poet, utters the speech that makes up the whole of the poem, in a specific situation at a critical moment (2) This person addresses and interacts with one or more other people; but we know of the auditors' presence, and what they say and do, only from clues in the

discourse of the single speaker. (3) The main principle controlling the poet's formulation of what the lyric speaker says is to reveal to the reader, in a way that enhances its interest, the speaker's temperament and character.

14. Elegy: In Greek and Roman literature, 'elegy denoted any poem written in elegiac meter. The term was also used, however, to refer to the subject matter of change and loss frequently expressed in the elegiac verse form, especially in complaints about love. John Donne's elegies, written in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, are love poems. An important subtype of the *elegy* is the pastoral elegy, which *represents* both the poet and the one he mourns who is usually also a poet as shepherds. This poetic form was originated by the Sicilian Greek poet Theocritus, was continued by the Roman Virgil, was developed in various European countries during the Renaissance, and remained current in English poetry throughout the nineteenth century.

15. Enlightenment: The name applied to an intellectual movement and cultural ambiance which developed in western Europe during the seventeenth century and reached its height in the eighteenth. The common element was a trust in human reason as adequate to solve the crucial problems and to establish the essential norms in life, together with the belief that the application of reason was rapidly dissipating the darkness of superstition, prejudice, and barbarity, was freeing humanity from its earlier reliance on mere authority and unexamined tradition, and had opened the prospect of progress toward a life in this world of universal peace and happiness.

16. Fiction and Truth: In comprehensive sense, fiction is any literary *narrative*, whether in prose or verse, which is invented instead of being an account of events that in fact happened. In a narrower sense, however, fiction denotes only narratives that are written in prose, and sometimes is used simply as a synonym for the novel. Literary prose narratives in which the fiction is to a prominent degree based on biographical, historical, or contemporary facts are often referred to by compound names such as *fictional biography*, *the historical novel*, and *the nonfiction novel*.

17. Form and Structure: 'Form' is one of the most frequent terms in literary criticism, but also one of the most diverse in its meanings. It is often used merely to designate a *genre* or literary type, or for patterns of meter, lines, and rhymes.

18. Genres: It denotes types or classes of literature. The genres into which literary works have been grouped at different times are very numerous, and the criteria on which the classifications have been based are different.

19. Graveyard Poets: A term applied to eighteenth-century poets who wrote meditative poems, usually set in a graveyard, on the theme of

human mortality, in moods which range from elegiac pensiveness to profound gloom. Examples are Edward Young's long *Night Thoughts*, and Robert Blair's *The Grave*. The vogue resulted in one of the most widely known English poems, Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*. The writing of graveyard poems spread from England to Continental literature in the second part of the century and is represented in America by William Cullen Bryant's *Thanatopsis*.

20. Imitation: In literary criticism the word imitation has two frequent but diverse applications: (1) to define the nature of literature and the other arts, and (2) to indicate the relation of one literary work to another literary work which served as its model.

21. Imagery: This is one of the most common in criticism, and one of the most variable in meaning. Its applications range all the way from the 'mental pictures' which, it is sometimes claimed, are experienced by the reader of a poem, to the totality of the components which make up a poem.

Imagery is used to signify all the objects and qualities of sense perception referred to in a poem or other work of literature, whether by literal description, by *allusion*, or its similes and metaphors. For example in William Wordsworth's *She Dwelt among the Untrodden Ways*, the imagery in this broad sense includes the literal objects the poem refers to for example, 'untrodden ways,' 'springs' and 'grave', as well as the 'violet' of the metaphor and the 'star' of the simile in the second stanza.

22. Local Color: The detailed representation in prose fiction of the setting, dialect, customs, dress, and ways of thinking and feeling which are distinctive of a particular region, such as Thomas Hardy's *Wessex*. After the Civil War a number of American writers exploited the literary possibilities of local color in various parts of America. The term 'local color writing' is often applied to works which, like O. Henry's or Damon Runyon's stories set in New York City, rely for their interest mainly on a sentimental or comic representation of the surface particularities of a region, instead of on more deep-seated, complex, and general human characteristics and problems.

23. Lyric: In the most common use of the term, a lyric is any fairly short poem, consisting of the utterance by a single speaker, who expresses a state of mind or a process of perception, thought, and feeling.

Although the lyric is uttered in the first person, the "I" in the poem need not be the poet who wrote it. In the original Greek, 'lyric' signified a song rendered to the accompaniment of a lyre. In some current usages, lyric still retains the sense of a poem written to be set to music; the *hymn*, for example, is a lyric on a religious subject that is intended to be sung.

24. Metaphysical Poets: John Dryden said in his *Discourse Concerning Satire* (1693) that John Donne in his poetry "affects the metaphysics," meaning that Donne employs the terminology and abstruse arguments of the medieval Scholastic philosophers. In 1779 Samuel Johnson extended the term "meta-physical" from Donne to a school of poets, in the acute and balanced critique which he incorporated in his "Life of Cowley." The name is now applied to a group of seventeenth-century poets who, whether or not directly influenced by Donne, employ similar poetic procedures and imagery, both in secular poetry (Cleveland, Marvell, Cowley) and in religious poetry (Herbert, Vaughan, Crashaw, and Traherne).

Attempts have been made to demonstrate that these poets had in common a philosophical worldview. The term "metaphysical," however, fits these very diverse writers only if it is used, as Johnson used it, to indicate a common poetic style, use of figurative language, and way of organizing the meditative process or the poetic argument. Donne set the metaphysical mode by writing poems which are sharply opposed to the rich mellifluousness and the idealized view of human nature and of sexual love which had constituted a central tradition in Elizabethan poetry, especially in Spenser and the writers of Petrarchan sonnets; Donne's poems are opposed also to the fluid, regular verification of Donne's contemporaries, the Cavalier poets. Instead, Donne wrote in a diction and meter modeled on the rough give-and-take of actual speech, and often organized his poems in the form of an urgent or heated argument—with a reluctant mistress, or an intruding friend, or God, or death, or with himself. He employed a subtle and often deliberately outrageous logic; he was realistic, ironic, and sometimes cynical in his treatment of the complexity of human motives, especially in the sexual relation; and whether playful or serious, and whether writing the poetry of love or of intense religious experience, he was above all "witty," making ingenious use of paradox, pun, and startling parallels in simile and metaphor (see metaphysical conceit and wit).

25. Meter: Meter is the recurrence, in regular units, of a prominent feature in the sequence of speech-sounds of a language. There are four main types of meter in European languages: (1) In classical Greek and Latin, the meter was quantitative; that is, it was established by the relative duration of the utterance of a syllable, and consisted of a recurrent pattern of long and short syllables. (2) In French and many other Romance languages, the meter is syllabic, depending on the number of syllables within a line of verse, without regard to the fall of the stresses. (3) In the older Germanic languages, including Old English, the meter is accentual, depending on the number of stressed syllables within a line, without regard to the number of intervening unstressed syllables. (4) The fourth type of meter, combining the features of the two preceding types, is accentual-syllabic, in which the metric units consist of a recurrent pattern of stresses on a recurrent number of syllables. The stress-and-syllable

type has been the predominant meter of English poetry since the fourteenth century.

The meter is determined by the pattern of stronger and weaker stresses on the syllables composing the words in the verse-line; the stronger is called the "stressed" syllable and all the weaker ones the "unstressed" syllables. (What the ear perceives as a strong stress is not an absolute quantity, but is relative to the degree of stress in the adjacent syllables.) Three major factors determine where the stresses (in the sense of the relatively stronger stresses or accents) will fall in a line of verse:

(1) Most important is the "word accent" in words of more than one syllable; in the noun "accent" itself, for example, the stress falls on the first syllable.

(2) There are also many monosyllabic words in the language, and on which of these—in a sentence or a phrase—the stress will fall depends on the grammatical function of the word (we normally put stronger stress on nouns, verbs, and adjectives, for example, than on articles or prepositions), and depends also on the "rhetorical accent," or the emphasis we give a word because we want to enhance its importance in a particular utterance.

(3) Another determinant of perceived stress is the prevailing "metrical accent," which is the beat that we have come to expect, in accordance with the stress pattern that was established earlier in the metrical composition.

A foot is the combination of a strong stress and the associated weak stress or stresses which make up the recurrent metric unit of a line. The relatively stronger-stressed syllable is called, for short, "stressed"; the relatively weaker-stressed syllables are called "light," or most commonly, "unstressed."

The four standard feet distinguished in English are:

(1) **Iambic** (the noun is "iamb"): an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable.

The cúr I few tolls I the knéll I of par I ting day. I (Thomas Gray,
"Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard")

(2) **Anapestic** (the noun is "anapest"): two unstressed syllables followed by a stressed syllable.

The Äs syr I iän came down I like ä wólf I on the fold. I (Lord Byron,
"The Destruction of Sennacherib")

(3) **Trochaic** (the noun is "trochee"): a stressed followed by an unstressed syllable.

There they I are, my I fif ty I men and I wó men. I
(Robert Browning, "One Word More")

Most trochaic lines lack the final unstressed syllable—in the technical term, such lines are catalectic. So in Blake's "The Tiger":

Tí gér! I tí gër! I burn ing I bright I
In the I fo rest I of the I night. I

(4) **Dactylic** (the noun is "dactyl"): a stressed syllable followed by two unstressed syllables.

Eve, with her I bas kët, was I
Deep in the I bells and grass. I

(Ralph Hodgson, "Eve")

Iambs and **anapests**, since the strong stress is at the end, are called "rising meter"; trochees and dactyls, with the strong stress at the beginning, are called "falling meter." Iambs and trochees, having two syllables, are called "duple meter"; anapests and dactyls, having three syllables, are called "triple meter." It should be noted that the iamb is by far the commonest English foot.

Two other feet are often distinguished by special titles, although they occur in English meter only as variants from standard feet:

Spondaic (the noun is "spondee"): two successive syllables with approximately equal strong stresses, as in each of the first two feet of this line:

Good stróngl thick stulpë fyl ing inlcēse smóke.I

(Browning, "The Bishop Orders His Tomb")

Pyrrhic (the noun is also "pyrrhic"): a foot composed of two successive syllables with approximately equal light stresses, as in the second and fourth feet in this line:

My way I is to I be gin I with the I be gin ningl

(Byron, Don Juan)

A metric line is named according to the number of feet composing it:

Monometer: one foot

Dimeter: two feet

Trimeter: three feet

Tetrameter: four feet

Pentameter: five feet

Hexameter: six feet (an Alexandrine is a line of six iambic feet)

Heptameter: seven feet (a fourteener is another term for a line of seven iambic feet—hence, of fourteen syllables; it tends to break into a unit of four feet followed by a unit of three feet)

Octameter: eight feet

26. Miracle Plays, Morality Plays, and Interludes: Miracle Plays, Morality Plays, and Interludes are types of late-medieval drama, written in a variety of verse forms.

The **miracle** play had as its subject either a story from the Bible, or else the life and martyrdom of a saint. In the usage of some historians, however, "Miracle play" denotes only dramas based on saints' lives, and the term mystery play—"mystery" in the archaic sense of the "trade" conducted by each of the medieval guilds who sponsored these plays—is applied only to dramas based on the Bible.

Morality plays were dramatized allegories of a representative Christian life in the plot form of a quest for salvation, in which the crucial events are temptations, sinning, and the climactic confrontation with death.

Interlude (Latin, "between the play") is a term applied to a variety of short stage entertainments, such as secular farces and witty dialogues with a religious or political point.

Until the middle of the present century, concern with medieval drama was scholarly rather than critical. Since that time a number of studies have dealt with the relations of the texts to the religious and secular culture of

medieval Europe, and have stressed the artistic excellence and power of the plays themselves.

27. Modernism and Postmodernism: The term modernism is widely used to identify new and distinctive features in the subjects, forms, concepts, and styles of literature and the other arts in the early decades of the present century, but especially after World War I (1914-18). The specific features signified by "modernism" (or by the adjective modernist) vary with the user, but many critics agree that it involves a deliberate and radical break with some of the traditional bases not only of Western art, but of Western culture in general. Important intellectual precursors of modernism, in this sense, are thinkers who had questioned the certainties that had supported traditional modes of social organization, religion, and morality, and also traditional ways of conceiving the human self—thinkers such as Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, and James G. Frazer.

Literary historians locate the beginning of the modernist revolt as far back as the 1890s, but most agree that what is called high modernism, marked by an unexampled range and rapidity of change, came after the first World War. The year 1922 alone was signalized by the simultaneous appearance of such monuments of modernist innovation as James Joyce's *Ulysses*, T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, and Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room*, as well as many other experimental works of literature. The catastrophe of the war had shaken faith in the moral basis, coherence, and durability of Western civilization and raised doubts about the adequacy of traditional literary modes to represent the harsh and dissonant realities of the postwar world.

A prominent feature of modernism is the phenomenon called the avant-garde (a military metaphor: "advance-guard"); that is, a small, self-conscious group of artists and authors who deliberately undertake, in Ezra Pound's phrase, to "make it new."

The term **postmodernism** is often applied to the literature and art after World War II (1939-45), when the effects on Western morale of the first war were greatly exacerbated by the experience of Nazi totalitarianism and mass extermination, the threat of total destruction by the atomic bomb, the progressive devastation of the natural environment, and the ominous fact of over-population. Postmodernism involves not only a continuation, sometimes carried to an extreme, of the counter traditional experiments of modernism, but also diverse attempts to break away from modernist forms which had, inevitably, become in their turn conventional, as well as to overthrow the elitism of modernist "high art" by recourse to the models of "mass culture" in film, television, newspaper cartoons, and popular music. Many of the works of post-modern literature—by Jorge Luis Borges, Samuel Beckett, Vladimir Nabokov, Thomas Pynchon, Roland Barthes, and many others—so blend literary genres, cultural and stylistic levels, the serious and the playful, that they resist classification according to traditional literary rubrics. And these literary anomalies are paralleled in other arts by phenomena like pop art, op art, the musical

compositions of John Cage, and the films of Jean-Luc Godard and other directors.

28. Novel: The term "**novel**" is now applied to a great variety of writings that have in common only the attribute of being extended works of fiction written in prose. As an extended narrative, the novel is distinguished from the short story and from the work of middle length called the novelette; its magnitude permits a greater variety of characters, greater complication of plot (or plots), ampler development of milieu, and more sustained exploration of character and motives than do the shorter, more concentrated modes. As a narrative written in prose, the novel is distinguished from the long narratives in verse of Geoffrey Chaucer, Edmund Spenser, and John Milton which, beginning with the eighteenth century, the novel has increasingly supplanted. Within these limits the novel includes such diverse works as Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* and Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*; Jane Austen's *Emma* and Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*; Charles Dickens' *Pickwick Papers* and Henry James' *The Wings of the Dove*; Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* and Franz Kafka's *The Trial*; Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* and James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*; Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* and Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*.

The term for the novel in most European languages is *roman*, which is derived from the medieval term, the *romance*. The English name for the form, on the other hand, is derived from the Italian *novella* (literally, "a little new thing"), which was a short tale in prose. In fourteenth-century Italy there was a vogue for collections of such tales, some serious and some scandalous; the best known of these collections is Boccaccio's *Decameron*, which is still available in English translation at any well-stocked bookstore. Currently the term "*novella*" (or in the German form, *Novelle*) is often used as an equivalent for novelette: a prose fiction of middle length, such as Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* or Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*.

29. Objective and Subjective: The social critic John Ruskin complained in 1856 that "German dullness and English affectation have of late much multiplied among us the use of two of the most objectionable words that were ever coined by the troublesomeness of metaphysicians—namely, 'Objective' and 'subjective.'" Ruskin was at least in part right. The words were imported into English criticism from the post-Kantian German critics of the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and they have certainly been troublesome. Amid the great variety of sometimes conflicting ways in which the opposition has been applied to literature, one is sufficiently widespread to be worth specifying.

A subjective work is one in which the author incorporates personal experiences, or projects into the narrative his or her personal disposition, judgments, values, and feelings. An objective work is one in which the author presents the invented situation or the fictional characters and their thoughts, feelings, and actions and undertakes to remain detached and noncommittal.

Critics agree, however, that the difference between a subjective and objective literary work is not absolute, but a matter of degree.

30. Ode: A long lyric poem that is serious in subject and treatment, elevated in style, and elaborate in its stanzaic structure. As Norman Maclean has said, the term now calls to mind a lyric which is "massive, public in its proclamations, and Pindaric in its classical prototype" ("From Action to Image," in *Critics and Criticism*, ed. R. S. Crane, 1952). The prototype was established by the Greek poet Pindar, whose odes were modeled on the songs by the chorus in Greek drama. His complex stanzas were patterned in sets of three: moving in a dance rhythm to the left, the chorus chanted the strophe; moving to the right, the antistrophe; then, standing still, the epode.

The regular or Pindaric ode in English is a close imitation of Pindar's form, with all the strophes and antistrophes written in one stanza pattern, and all the epodes in another. This form was introduced into England by Ben Jonson's ode "To the Immortal Memory and Friendship of That Noble Pair, Sir Lucius Cary and Sir H. Morison" (1629); the typical construction can be conveniently studied in this poem or in Thomas Gray's "The Progress of Poesy" (1757). The irregular ode was introduced in 1656 by Abraham Cowley, who imitated the Pindaric style and matter but disregarded the recurrent stanzaic pattern in each strophic triad; instead, he allowed each stanza to establish its own pattern of variable line lengths, number of lines, and rhyme scheme. This type of irregular stanzaic structure, which is free to alter in accordance with shifts in subject and mood, has been the most common for the English ode ever since; Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality" (1807) is representative.

The Horatian ode was originally modeled on the matter, tone, and form of the odes of the Roman Horace. In contrast to the passion, visionary boldness, and formal language of Pindar's odes, many Horatian odes are calm, meditative, and colloquial; they are also usually homostrophic (that is, written in a single repeated stanza form), and shorter than the Pindaric ode. Examples are Marvell's "An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland" (1650) and Keats' ode "To Autumn" (1820).

31. Plot: The plot (which Aristotle termed the *mythos*) in a dramatic or narrative work is constituted by its events and actions, as these are rendered and ordered toward achieving particular artistic and emotional effects. This description is deceptively simple, because the actions (including verbal discourse as well as physical actions) are performed by particular characters in a work, and are the means by which they exhibit their moral and dispositional qualities. Plot and character are therefore interdependent critical concepts—as Henry James has said, "What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character?" Note also that a plot is distinguishable from the story—that is, a bare synopsis of the temporal order of what happens.

As a plot evolves it arouses expectations in the audience or reader about the future course of events and actions and how characters will respond to them. A lack of certainty, on the part of a concerned reader, about what is

going to happen, especially to characters with whom the reader has established a bond of sympathy, is known as suspense. If what in fact happens violates any expectations we have formed, it is known as surprise. The interplay of suspense and surprise is a prime source of vitality in a traditional plot. The most effective surprise, especially in realistic narratives, is one which turns out, in retrospect, to have been grounded in what has gone before, even though we have hitherto made the wrong inference from the given facts of circumstance and character.

A plot is commonly said to have 'unity of action', if it is apprehended by the reader or auditor as a complete and ordered structure of actions, directed toward the intended effect, in which none of the prominent component parts, or incidents, is nonfunctional; as Aristotle put this concept, all the parts are "so closely connected that the transposai or withdrawal of any one of them will disjoint and dislocate the whole." Aristotle claimed that it does not constitute a unified plot to present a series of episodes which are strung together simply because they happen to a single character.

32. Poetic Justice: The term **diction** signifies the types of words, phrases, and sentence structures, and sometimes also of figurative language, that constitute any work of literature. A writer's diction can be analyzed under a great variety of categories, such as the degree to which the vocabulary and phrasing is abstract or concrete, Latin or Anglo-Saxon in origin, colloquial or formal, technical or common.

Many poets in all ages have used a distinctive language, a "poetic diction," which includes words, phrasing, and figures not current in the ordinary discourse of the time. In modern discussion, however, the term **poetic diction** is applied especially to poets who, like Edmund Spenser in the Elizabethan age or G. M. Hopkins in the Victorian age, deliberately employed a diction that deviated markedly not only from common speech, but even from the writings of other poets of their era.

33. Pre-Raphaelites: In 1848 a group of English artists, including Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Holman Hunt, and John Millais, organized the "Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood." Their aim was to replace the reigning academic style of painting by a return to the truthfulness, simplicity, and spirit of devotion which they attributed to Italian painting before the time of Raphael (1483-1520) and the high Italian Renaissance. The ideals of this group of painters were taken over by a literary movement which included Dante Gabriel Rossetti himself (who was a poet as well as a painter), his sister Christina Rossetti, William Morris, and Algernon Swinburne. Rossetti's poem "The Blessed Damozel" typifies the medievalism, the pictorial realism with symbolic overtones, and the union of flesh and spirit, sensuousness and religiousness, associated with the earlier writings of this school.

34. Prose: Prose is an inclusive term for all discourse, spoken or written, which is not patterned into the lines either of metric verse or of free verse. It is possible to discriminate a great variety of non-metric types of

language, which can be placed along a spectrum according to the degree to which they exploit, and make prominent, modes of formal organization. At one end is the irregular, and only occasionally formal, prose of ordinary discourse. Distinguished written discourse, in what John Dryden called "that other harmony of prose," is no less an art than distinguished verse; in all literatures, in fact, artfully written prose seems to have developed later than written verse. As written prose gets more "literary"—whether its function is descriptive, expository, narrative, or expressive—it exhibits more patent, though highly diverse, modes of rhythm and other formal features. The prose translations of the poetic books of the Old Testament in the King James Bible, for example, have a repetition, balance, and contrast of clauses which approximate the form that in the nineteenth century was named "the prose poem."

Prose poems are densely compact, pronouncedly rhythmic, and highly sonorous compositions which are written as a continuous sequence of sentences without line breaks. Examples of prose poems are, in French, Charles Baudelaire's *Little Poems in Prose* (1869) and Arthur Rimbaud's *Illuminations* (1886), and in English, excerptible passages in Walter Pater's prose essays, such as his famous meditation on Leonardo da Vinci's painting the Mona Lisa, in *The Renaissance* (1873). John Ashberry's *Three Poems* (1972) are prose poems, in that they are printed continuously, without broken lines. Farther still along the formal spectrum, we leave the domain of prose, by the use of line breaks and the controlled rhythms, pauses, syntactical suspensions, and cadences that identify free verse. At the far end of the spectrum we get the regular, recurrent units of weaker and stronger stressed syllables that constitute the meters of English verse.

35. Problem Play: A type of drama that was popularized by the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen. In problem plays, the situation faced by the protagonist is put forward by the author as a representative instance of a contemporary social problem; often the dramatist manages by the use of a character who speaks for the author, or by the evolution of the plot, or both to propose a solution to the problem which is at odds with prevailing opinion. The issue may be the drastically inadequate autonomy, scope, and dignity allotted to women in the middle-class nineteenth-century family (Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, 1879); or the morality of prostitution, regarded as a typical product of the economic arrangements in a capitalist society (George Bernard Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, 1898); or the crisis in racial and ethnic relations in present-day America (in numerous current dramas and films).

36. Prosody: Prosody signifies the systematic study of versification in poetry; that is, a study of the principles and practice of meter, rhyme, and stanza forms. Some-times the term "prosody" is extended to include also the study of speech-sound patterns and effects such as alliteration, assonance, euphony, and onomatopoeia.

37. Refrain: A line, or part of a line, or a group of lines, which is repeated in the course of a poem, sometimes with slight changes, and

usually at the end of each stanza. The refrain occurs in many ballads and work poems, and is a frequent element in Elizabethan songs, where it may be merely a nonverbal carrier of the melodic line, as in Shakespeare's "It Was a Lover and His Lass": "With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino." A famous refrain is that which closes each stanza in Edmund Spenser's "Epithalamion" (1594)—"The woods shall to me answer, and my echo ring"—in which sequential changes indicate the altering sounds during the successive hours of the poet's wedding day.

A refrain may consist only of a single word—"Nevermore" as in Poe's "The Raven" (1845)—or of an entire stanza. If the stanza-refrain occurs in a song, as a section to be sung by all the auditors, it is called the chorus; for, ex-ample, in "Auld Lang Syne" and many other songs by Robert Burns in the late eighteenth century.

38. Renaissance: Renaissance ("rebirth") is the name commonly applied to the period of European history following the Middle Ages; it is usually said to have begun in Italy in the late fourteenth century and to have continued, both in Italy and other countries of western Europe, through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In this period the European arts of painting, sculpture, architecture, and literature reached an eminence not exceeded in any age. The development came late to England in the sixteenth century, and did not have its flowering until the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods; sometimes, in fact, John Milton (1608-74) is described as the last great Renaissance poet.

39. Rhyme: In English versification, standard rhyme consists of the repetition, in the rhyming words, of the last stressed vowel and of all the speech sounds following that vowel: *lâte-fâte*; *fóllow-hóllow*.

End rhymes, by far the most frequent type, occur at the end of a verse-line. **Internal rhymes** occur within a verse-line, as in the Victorian poet Algernon Swinburne's

Sister, my sister, O *fleet* sweet swallow.

A stanza from Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" illustrates the patterned use both of internal rhymes (within lines 1 and 3) and of an end rhyme (lines 2 and 4):

In mist or *cloud*, on mast or *shroud*,
It perched for vespers *nine*-,
Whiles all the *night*, through fog-smoke *white*,
Glimmered the white *moon-shine*.

40. Setting: The overall setting of a narrative or dramatic work is the general locale, historical time, and social circumstances in which its action occurs; the setting of a single episode or scene within such a work is the particular physical location in which it takes place. The overall setting of Macbeth, for is medieval Scotland, and the setting for the particular scene in which Macbeth comes upon the witches is a blasted heath. When applied to a theatrical production, "setting" is synonymous with *décor*, which is a French term *denoting* both the scenery and the properties, or movable pieces of furniture, on the stage. The French *mise*

en scène ("placing on stage") is sometimes used in English synonymously with "setting"; it is more useful, however, to apply the term more broadly, as the French do, to signify a director's overall conception, staging, and directing of a theatrical performance.

41. Seven Deadly Sins: In medieval and later Christian theology these sins were usually identified as Pride, Covetousness, Lust, Envy, Gluttony, Anger, and Sloth. They were called "deadly" because they were considered to put the soul of anyone manifesting them in peril of eternal perdition; such sins could be expiated only by absolute penitence. Among them, Pride was often considered primary, since it was believed to have motivated the original fall of Satan in heaven. Sloth was accounted a deadly sin because it signified not simply laziness, but a torpid and despondent spiritual condition that threatened to make a person despair of any chance of achieving divine Grace. Alternative names for sloth were *accidie*, "dejection," and "spiritual dryness"; it was a condition close to that which present-day psychiatrists diagnose as acute depression.

The seven deadly sins were balanced by the *seven cardinal virtues*. Three of these, called the "theological virtues" because they were stressed in the New Testament, were *Faith*, *Hope*, and *Charity*. "And now abideth faith, hope, and charity, these three." The other four, the "natural virtues," were derived from the moral philosophy of the ancient Greeks: justice, prudence, temperance, and fortitude.

42. Soliloquy: **Soliloquy** is the act of talking to oneself, whether silently or aloud. In drama it denotes the convention by which a character, alone on the stage, utters his or her thoughts aloud. Playwrights have used this device as a convenient way to convey information about a character's motives and state of mind, or for purposes of exposition, and sometimes in order to guide the judgments and responses of the audience. Christopher Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* (first performed in 1594) opens with a long expository soliloquy, and concludes with another which expresses Faustus' frantic mental and emotional condition during his belated attempts to escape damnation. The best-known of all dramatic soliloquies is Hamlet's speech which begins "To be or not to be."

43. Sonnet: A **lyric** poem consisting of a single stanza of fourteen iambic pentameter lines linked by an intricate rhyme scheme. There are two major patterns of rhyme in sonnets written in the English language:

(1) The Italian or Petrarchan sonnet (named after the fourteenth-century Italian poet Petrarch) falls into two main parts: an octave (eight lines) rhyming abbaabba followed by a sestet (six lines) rhyming cdecde or some variant, such as cdccdc. Petrarch's sonnets were first imitated in England, both in their stanza form and their subject—the hopes and pains of an adoring male lover—by Sir Thomas Wyatt in the early sixteenth century. The Petrarchan form was later used, and for a variety of subjects, by Milton, Wordsworth, Christina Rossetti, D. G. Rossetti, and other sonneteers, who sometimes made it technically easier in English (which

does not have as many rhyming possibilities as Italian) by introducing a new pair of rhymes in the second four lines of the octave.

(2) The Earl of Surrey and other English experimenters in the sixteenth century also developed a stanza form called the English sonnet, or else the Shakespearean sonnet, after its greatest practitioner. This sonnet falls into three quatrains and a concluding couplet: abab cdcd efef gg. There was one notable variant, the Spenserian sonnet, in which Spenser linked each quatrain to the next by a continuing rhyme: abab bebe cdcd ee.

44. Stanza: A **stanza** (Italian for "stopping place") is a grouping of the verse-lines in a poem, often set off by a space in the printed text. Usually the stanzas of a given poem are marked by a recurrent pattern of rhyme and are also uniform in the number and lengths of the component lines. Some unrhymed poems, however, are divided into stanzaic units (for example, William Collins' "Ode to Evening," 1747), and some rhymed poems are composed of stanzas that vary in their component lines.

Of the great diversity of English stanza forms, many have no special names and must be described by specifying the number of lines, the type and number of metric feet in each line, and the pattern of the rhyme. Certain stanzas, however, occur so often that they have been given the convenience of a name. Some literary scholars apply the term "stanza" only to divisions of four or more lines. This entry, however, follows a widespread application of the term also to divisions of two and three lines.

A **couplet** is a pair of rhymed lines that are equal in length. The octosyllabic couplet has lines of eight syllables, usually consisting of four iambic feet.

Terza rima is composed of tercets which are interlinked, in that each is joined to the one following by a common rhyme: aba, beb, ede, and so on. The **quatrain**, or four-line stanza, is the most common in English versification, and is employed with various meters and rhyme schemes.

The **heroic quatrain**, is stanza with iambic pentameter with abab rhyming.

Ottava rima, as the Italian name indicates, has eight lines; it rhymes abababcc.

Spenserian stanza is a still longer form devised by Edmund Spenser for *The Faerie Queene* (1590-96)—nine lines, in which the first eight lines are iambic pentameter and the last iambic hexameter (an Alexandrine), rhyming ababbcbcc.

• CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-1

CHOOSE THE CORRECT OPTION FROM GIVEN BELOW.

- 1) Act is introduced by _____
 - a) Elizabethan dramatist
 - b) Shakespeare
 - c) Milton
- 2) The initial version of a ballad was composed by a ----- author
 - a) Single

- b) double
 - c) triple
- 3) -----defined biography as "the history of particular men's lives.
- a) John Dryden
 - b) Milton
 - c) Wordsworth
- 4) The term postmodernism is often applied to the literature and art after -----
- a) World War I
 - b) World War II
 - c) None of the above
- 5) A long lyric poem that is serious in subject and treatment, elevated in style, and elaborate in its stanzaic structure., is known as -----
- a) Ode
 - b) Novel
 - c) Short story

• CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-2

Explain in detail: What is a stanza? Explain different types of stanza?

17.4 LETS US SUM UP

In this unit you have learnt;

- A few selected literary terms, along with their detail meaning.
- About association of the terms discussed in this unit.

17.3 KEY WORDS

Division: the action of separating something into parts or the process of being separated.

Protagonist: he leading character or one of the major characters in a play, film, novel, etc.

Tragedy: an event causing great suffering, destruction, and distress, such as a serious accident, crime, or natural catastrophe.

Transmitted: passed on from one person or place to another.

Ancient: belonging to the very distant past and no longer in existence.

17.5 SUGGESTED READING

1. Abrams, Meyer Howard, and Geoffrey Harpham. *A glossary of Literary Terms*. Cengage Learning, 2011.
2. Baldick, Chris. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Oxford University Press, 1996.
3. Cuddon, John Anthony. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. John Wiley & Sons, 2012.
4. Childs, Peter, and Roger Fowler. *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Routledge, 2006.

17.6 WEB-RESOURCES

1. https://mthoyibi.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/a-glossary-of-literary-terms-7th-ed_m-h-abrams-1999.pdf
2. https://www.uv.es/fores/The_Routledge_Dictionary_of_Literary_Terms.pdf
3. [http://armytage.net/pdsdata/%5BChris_Baldick%5D_The_Concise_Oxford_Dictionary_of_L\(BookFi.org\).pdf](http://armytage.net/pdsdata/%5BChris_Baldick%5D_The_Concise_Oxford_Dictionary_of_L(BookFi.org).pdf)

Answer

1-A, 2-A, 3-A, 4-B, 5-A

યુનિવર્સિટી ગીત

સ્વાધ્યાય: પરમં તપ:

સ્વાધ્યાય: પરમં તપ:

સ્વાધ્યાય: પરમં તપ:

શિક્ષણ, સંસ્કૃતિ, સદ્ભાવ, દિવ્યબોધનું ધામ
ડૉ. બાબાસાહેબ આંબેડકર ઓપન યુનિવર્સિટી નામ;
સૌને સૌની પાંખ મળે, ને સૌને સૌનું આભ,
દશે દિશામાં સ્મિત વહે હો દશે દિશે શુભ-લાભ.

અભણ રહી અજ્ઞાનના શાને, અંધકારને પીવો ?
કહે બુદ્ધ આંબેડકર કહે, તું થા તારો દીવો;
શારદીય અજવાળા પહોંચ્યાં ગુર્જર ગામે ગામ
ધ્રુવ તારકની જેમ ઝળહળે એકલવ્યની શાન.

સરસ્વતીના મયૂર તમારે ફળિયે આવી ગહેકે
અંધકારને હડસેલીને ઉજાસના ફૂલ મહેંકે;
બંધન નહીં કો સ્થાન સમયના જવું ન ઘરથી દૂર
ઘર આવી મા હરે શારદા દૈન્ય તિમિરના પૂર.

સંસ્કારોની સુગંધ મહેંકે, મન મંદિરને ધામે
સુખની ટપાલ પહોંચે સૌને પોતાને સરનામે;
સમાજ કેરે દરિયે હાંકી શિક્ષણ કેરું વહાણ,
આવો કરીયે આપણ સૌ
ભવ્ય રાષ્ટ્ર નિર્માણ...
દિવ્ય રાષ્ટ્ર નિર્માણ...
ભવ્ય રાષ્ટ્ર નિર્માણ



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