
UNIT 1 THE BEGINNING OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

As students of English literature, you should be familiar with the origin of English literature. According to Anthony Burgess, English literature refers to the literature written in the English language and not just the British Isles but in this short history of English literature, we will mainly focus on the history of literature written in the British Isles. Burgess further says, "Literature is the art which exploits language, English Literature is an art which exploits the English language." Thus, the knowledge of language is a prerequisite to the understanding of literature. Before moving on with the history of English literature, let us first acquaint ourselves with the history of the English language.

Historically speaking, the English language was primarily the language spoken in the British Isles. Keeping in mind the time factor, it can be divided into three major phases- the Old English, the Middle English and the Modern English. Moving back to the history of the British Isles, the first Englishmen were foreigners and for that reason the old English used by them is treated like any other foreign language. The old English literature was mainly the poetry and prose written by the ancestors of the English, which acts as a foundation to the whole body of literary works written till date. Between the Old English and the Modern English there is a transitional phase of Middle English which has the characteristics of both the Old English and any other foreign language.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

- This unit will focus on the beginning of English literature
- It will deal with a brief history of the pre Anglo-Saxon, Anglo Saxon and the Norman periods
- The important works of the above mentioned periods will be mentioned
- This unit will also focus on Chaucer and his age, keeping in mind the historical, social and political context
- You will also be given an account of some of the other major contemporary writers of Chaucer's time
- Thus, the aim of this unit is to make you understand how the first literature of the British Isles came into being so that your concepts are clear from the very beginning.

1.3 THE ANGLO SAXONS

As stated earlier, the first Englishmen were foreigners. The race that had existed in the isles since pre-historic times was the British race and is found mainly in Wales today but the Welsh are very different from the English in their language, culture and temperament. Ironically enough, the first inhabitants of the isles are now known as Welsh (from the old English for 'foreigner') After the Roman conquest of the British Isles in AD 43, these earlier inhabitants were known as 'Britanni' by the Romans and their country 'Britannia'. The Romans ruled Britannia for a few centuries and brought with them their language and culture which became an integral part of the Britannia. After the fall of the Roman Empire, migrants from East Europe which mainly included the Angles, Saxons and the Juts started making this land their home and finally settled here.

1.3.1 ANGLO SAXON LITERATURE

The history of English literature starts with the Anglo Saxon literature. The Anglo Saxon literature refers to the literature written in English before the Norman conquest of 1066. The Anglo Saxon literature can be further classified as under:

1. *The Latin writings of Monastic Clerks:* The monastic writings of monastic clerks include the following main monks:
 - Bede (672-735): Bede was a scholar who spent his life in the monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow. He is chiefly known for his *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* (*Ecclesiastical History of English Race*) and for this reason he is known as the ‘Father of English History.’
 - Alcuin (735-804): another important scholar of the Anglo Saxon period was Alcuin who compiled manuals of knowledge in the form of dialogues.
 - Aldhelm (604?-709): Aldhelm wrote superb treatises in Latin, both in prose and verse, in praise of virginity. We can see the use of brilliant imagery which is peculiar to the Anglo Saxon literature.
2. *Vernacular Literature of the Pre Christian Era:* The most important narratives of this period are the epic *Beowulf* and shorter poems like *Widsith* and *Deor*. *Beowulf* is the oldest poem in the English language. It was not composed in England but in the continent of Europe. The new settlers brought it along with them. It was not written down till the end of the ninth century. *Beowulf* is a warrior’s story written in over three thousand lines.
3. *Elegiac poems in the vernacular, mainly pre-Christian in feeling:* The most important of these poems is *The Seafarer* which was rewritten in modern English by the 20th century American poet Ezra Pound. *The Wanderer* is another important grief poem of this period. It tells of the grief of a young man on the death of his lord which moves on to general reflection on the transitory nature of human existence.
4. *Songs of War:* A number of war songs were written in Anglo Saxon literature. *Brunanburh*, a fragmentary work, describes the victory of the English army in 937 over invading Scots and Norsemen from Norse colonies in Ireland. *Battle of Maldon:* This work is also a fragment about the bitter fight between the East Saxon army and the Danes who raided their land.
5. *Vernacular Christian Poetry:* These are Biblical and devotional poems depicting Christian myths and traditions. Venerable Bede, in his ‘Ecclesiastical History of the English People’, gives an account of Caedmon, an important half-legendary figure. *Judith*, paraphrased from a book in the Apocrypha and *Fall of the Angels* are anonymous poems of this period. Cynewulf, another notable poet of this period, authored a poem about the Ascension of Christ and on the lives of other saints.
6. *Riddles:* The riddles of Anglo-Saxon literature seldom resemble the present day riddles. However, the English words then had the quality of riddles. These riddles seem to be a favourite of the Anglo-Saxons. Some of their shorter poems are known as riddles.

By now you already know that the Danes invaded England, and were finally defeated and were later confined to the north of the country through a settlement made as a result of a decisive treaty. After peace was restored, Alfred, the Anglo Saxon king, started paying attention to education, art and culture of his country. Alfred was an important figure in relation to the history of English literature. He translated many Latin books into English with the assistance of other scholars. His translations include 'Ecclesiastical History of English Literature'. An account of the later history of the Anglo Saxon times (from middle of the 9th century to 1154) has been given in the *Anglo Saxon Chronicle* which is a record of the main happenings of the country during those times.

1.3.2 SOME IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF ANGLO-SAXON LITERATURE

- Use of Alliteration: Alliteration was one of the characteristic features of Anglo-Saxon poetry. Alliteration is the repetition of initial sounds. Alliteration is often used, especially in poetry, to emphasize and to link words as well as to create pleasing, musical sounds.
- Use of Head Rhyme: The usage of Head Rhyme is another important characteristic of Anglo-Saxon poetry. Head rhyme is consonantal alliteration at the beginning of words. It is also called beginning rhyme.
- Melancholy note: A predominant trait of Anglo-Saxon literature is sadness. There is an underlying melancholy note in the Anglo-Saxon literature in general which is a result of the Anglo-Saxon way of life which "looked towards the grey northern seas-grim, heavy, melancholy and humorless." (Anthony Burgess)

This brings us to the end of the first thousand years of the Christian era. The next phase begins with the coming of the Normans who took over the reins of the country and reduced the Anglo Saxons to servitude. As Antony Burgess states with the coming of the Normans, the "Heavy-footed Old English was to become – through its mingling with a lighter, brighter tongue from sunnier lands- the richest and most various literary medium in the whole of history."

1.4 THE NORMAN CONQUEST

The word Norman means 'Northman'. They were originally 'Norsemen' from Norway, descendants of Vikings, who had conquered the province of northern France called Normandy after them. The Normans conquered England in the year 1066. By the time they came to England, they had become completely French in their way of life.

As mentioned earlier, by the time the Normans invaded England, they had become culturally French. Thus, the Norman Conquest was a French conquest as a result; French aristocracy was established in the English soil. William, the Duke of Normandy, had family ties with Edward the Confessor, the English king, who promised William the throne. When Edward died in 1066, the Saxon witan -council of elders -chose Harold II as king. This angered William of Normandy. William, thereupon led a few thousand Norman and French troops across the English channel to claim the throne forcefully. He confronted King Harold at the battle of Hastings near a seaside village in southern England. Harold's army was defeated and he was killed. The victorious Norman army thereafter marched towards London, ruthlessly crushing all resistance. On Christmas Day, at Westminster Abbey, William was coroneted the king of England. For the next five years, William consolidated his victory. He quelled the Anglo-Saxons, confiscated their lands, established Norman controlled governments at all levels, gradually establishing feudalism in England.

1.4.1 SHIFT OF LANGUAGE

With the coming of the Normans, their dialect of French became the language of England. The Normans conducted various businesses in French and Latin. In the law courts too, French was substituted for English. Saxons dealing with him had to learn French. As English was displaced by French, it suffered heavy losses. The Classical Old English verses died out, which were later revived in very different forms, but prose continued as sermons were still written in English and the *Anglo Saxon Chronicle* was still kept in monasteries.

1.4.2 NORMAN LITERATURE

The first writing of Norman literature in England is a catalogue of the king's property that was the whole of the country as William saw himself as the proprietor of the country. Although, William owned the land but he granted land to the nobles who had helped him in the conquest. Thereby, setting up a feudal system in England which eventually changed the English life. Feudalism was a kind of pyramid, with the king at the apex, followed by the nobility and the aristocracy, the lower rung of the society formed the base, these were men who worked on lands owned by rich people and had a very few rights.

The Norman literature was quite opposed to the grim and melancholy literature of the Anglo-Saxons. The old English verse was black and white, the French, coloured. Emile Legouis points out that the French writings were 'clere'-clear as their writings were lucid, blended well with the lighter melody of end-rhyme.

The Norman literature was neither true English literature nor true French literature. As the Normans settled in England, they lost touch of the French culture and language. The French they spoke had lost its purity. Furthermore, the Anglo-Saxons who had tried to desperately use the language of the conquerors failed miserably as a result of which Latin was employed as a compromise language. Norman literature exploits a lot of ancient Greek and Roman mythical and legendary figures, ranging from Agamemnon to Ulysses and from Aeneas, to Brutus.

Some important writings of this period include *Historia Regum Britanniae* (*The History of the Kings of Britain*) which was written in about 1140 by Geoffrey of Monmouth, a cleric and one of the major figures in the development of British historiography. This work was later translated into French by Wace and thereafter into English by Layamon. Layamon's work is in verse and it is called *Brut* after Brutus, (the legendary grandson of Aeneas), the mythical founder of Britain. Another towering figure, often eulogized in literature, is King Arthur. Arthur was Welsh in origin, the race defeated by the Anglo-Saxons and confined to the present region of Wales. Nonetheless, they were fascinated by the Welsh and their culture and tried to spread their customs throughout the country. The myth of King Arthur, the legendary British leader of the late 5th and early 6th centuries, who according to medieval histories and romances led the defense of Britain against the Saxon invaders, was made popular by the Anglo-Saxons. The Normans, like the Anglo-Saxons, invaded Wales and soon became interested in their culture and tradition. They too showed keen interest in the Arthurian legend and King Arthur finds place in Geoffrey of Manmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*. It was as a result of this book that Arthur rose to becoming a figure of international interest.

Other important writings include *Ormulum*, a translation of some of the Gospels read at Mass, by the monk Orm, *Ancrene Riwle*, which is about an advice given by a priest to three religious ladies living not in a convent but in a little house near a church. It was probably written by an Augustinian priest of Wigmore Abbey in North-West Herefordshire, *Handlyng Synne*, by Robert Mannyng, *Pricke of Conscience* by Richard Rolle, *The Owl and the Nightingale*, *Pearl*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Other important works of this period include an interesting book of travel writing by a supposed fictitious writer, Sir John Mandeville. This book is appealing

in many ways and seems to be a popular one. This book is novel as Mandeville introduced a lot of French words in this work. William Langland is another important writer of merit in the Old English technique. His *The Vision of Piers Plowman* not only attacked the abuses of the Christian Church in England but also calls upon the ordinary people to go on a relentless quest for the 'Holy Truth.'

1.4.2 SOME IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF NORMAN LITERATURE

As time passed, the Norman French and the Anglo-Saxon English mixed, resulting in English which was enriched with Norman French. Some important features of Norman literature are as follows:

- The language of the Normans was light, coloured and spirited as compared to the Anglo-Saxons which was grim, heavy, melancholy and humourless.
- Use of borrowed words from Latin and French (Latin being the parent tongue of French)
- Alliteration and head rhyme which were two important characteristics of Anglo-Saxon literature, soon came to an end.
- French stanza forms replaced the formlessness of Anglo-Saxon poetry.

With this we come to the end of the first phase of English literature. Now you must be clear as to how the first literature in the British Isles came into existence. Both the Anglo-Saxon and the Normans played a formative role in the creation of the first body of literary work of the English literature. Now we move on to Chaucer, who is an important milestone in English literature. In the age of Chaucer, ie the fourteenth century, gradually English started gaining importance again and took over as the spoken language of the upper middle class as a result English no longer remained a subordinate language to French as part of society. Before we move on with Chaucer, let us briefly take a look at the age in which he was born as Chaucer vividly portrays society in his works.

1.5 THE AGE OF CHAUCER: AN OVERVIEW

The early medieval society was divided into three estates. The nobility, which comprised of a small hereditary aristocracy, the *church*, and the large mass of commoners. But by the fourteenth century, the society was rapidly changing economically, politically and socially. A growing and prosperous middle class was beginning to play an increasingly important role, narrowing the traditional class boundaries; it was into this middle class that Chaucer was born. Chaucer's life and works especially *The Canterbury Tales* were deeply influenced by these forces.

1.5.1 THE LIFE AND WORKS OF CHAUCER

Geoffrey Chaucer was the son of a prosperous wine merchant and spent his boyhood in the mercantile atmosphere of London's Vintry where ships docked with wines from France and Spain. Later in life he served as a member of King Edward's personal household (1367) and took part in several diplomatic missions to Spain (1366), France (1368) and Italy (1372). Besides this, Chaucer undertook many other works as a young man, however, we best know him as a poet.

Chaucer is regarded as the 'Father of English Poetry' as, English poetry, in the true sense of the word, blossomed with his works although there were other contemporary writers of much acclaim like William Langland and John Gower too. William Langland was much known for his *Piers Plowman* and *Richard the Redeless* (incomplete) whereas John Gower wrote the famous

Confesso Amantis, an allegorical romance. William Langland and John Gower will be taken up later in this unit. Chaucer was the first person to be buried in what is now known as The Poet's Corner in the Westminster Abbey.

1.5.2 CHAUCER'S INFLUENCES

Chaucer wrote in English, French and Italian, as he was fluent in all the three languages. This could be a result of a young Chaucer having spent his boyhood days in London's Vintry, where he freely mixed with people of all sorts, heard *several languages being spoken*. Furthermore, he had been to countries like France and Italy on various diplomatic missions and had received schooling in Latin too. Chaucer, like Shakespeare, borrowed immensely from various sources, but both the literary giants had the capacity to assimilate things, so much so, that whatever they borrowed they made it their own.

1.6 THE CANTERBURY TALES

Although Chaucer has written many books in French, Italian and English but he is mainly known for his *Canterbury Tales*. *The Canterbury Tales*, introduces us to a group of twenty nine pilgrims, one of whom is Chaucer himself. The pilgrims are making a pilgrimage to the holy shrine of the martyr, Thomas a' Beckett, in Caterbury, Kent. On the way these pilgrims tell each other stories so that they do not get tired and bored. Chaucer intelligently picks up his pilgrims come from various sections of society, thereby giving a giving more round and complete picture of the medieval society. The following classes are represented by the means of some important characters in *The Canterbury Tales*.

1. **The Warring Class**- It is represented by the Knight with his son, the Squire and the Yeoman.
2. **Representatives of liberal professions**- A Doctor of Physic, a Man of Law, a Clerk of Oxford and the Poet himself.
3. **Agrarian Class**- It is represented by a Ploughman, a Miller, a Reeve and a Franklin.
4. **Trading Class**- Represented by a Merchant and a shipman.
5. **Art and Craft**- Represented by a Wife of Bath, a Haberdasher a Carpenter, a Webbe or weaver, a Dyer and a Tapicer.
6. **Secular Clergy**- Represented by the good Parson the Summoner of an ecclesiastical Court and a Canon.
7. **The Victuallers**- Represented by the Manciple , a Cook and the Host of the Tabard Inn.
8. **The Monastic Order**- Represented by rich Benedictine Monk, a Prioress with her Chaplin Nun, a Mendicant Friar and a Pardoner.

Chaucer makes poetry not merely an expression of his personal feelings but he makes poetry a vehicle for the study of man and manners and in doing so he presents a realistic chronicle of his age. Chaucer speaks through these diverse characters his poetry reveals the prejudices, habits, mental and physical traits, routine of a particular trade of these classes thus building up a

realistic picture of his age. Chaucer approach is more objective. He effaces himself and becomes more of an interpreter and a chronicler of his age.

1.7 OTHER CONTEMPORARY WRITERS

Although, it was Chaucer who was the most important writer of the fourteenth century, but the century also saw many other important writers who too made contributions in the writing of the first English Literature. The chief among them were as follows:

John Wycliff (1320?-84): Wycliff was a religious reformer. He is chiefly known for his translation of Bible. His translation of the Bible is regarded as one of the foundation work of English prose.

William Langland (1330-1400) : Langland is mostly accepted as the sole author of *Piers Plowman*, one of the greatest of English medieval works. According to some scholars, the poem is written by various authors. Nothing much is known about him, apart from some evidence from the poem itself. He is also considered to be the poet of the incomplete poem, *Richard the Redeless*.

Gower (1330-1408): Gower was a poet and a friend of Chaucer. His best known work is *Confessio Amantis*, an allegorical romance in English. Apart from English, he also wrote in French.

To conclude, the body of early English, although slender, is of great value as it a foundation on which in the entire body English literature stands proud today. The coming units we will cover other important periods and movements of English literature, focusing on how the English language and literature got transformed over the ages. In the next unit you will see how the flowering of Renaissance took place in the English soil.

1.8 GLOSSARY

CHARACTERISATION: Characterisation is the act of creating and developing a character. A writer uses *direct characterisation* when he or she states a character's traits explicitly. *Indirect characterisation* occurs when the writer reveal's character by some other means. When using indirect characterisation, the writer depends on the reader to infer a character's trait from the clues provided.

COUPLET: A couplet is a pair of rhyming lines written in the same meter.

Example: And if I give thee honour due,
Mirth, admit me of the crew
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unreproved pleasure free.

John Milton, *L' Allegro*

FABLE: A fable is a brief story, usually with animal characters, that teaches a lesson, or moral. For example, Aesop's Fables

FOIL: A foil is a character that provides a contrast to another character, thus intensifying the impact of the other character. For example, Banquo and Duncan act as foils for the ambitious and tyrannical Macbeth.

HEROIC COUPLET: A heroic couplet is a rhymed pair of iambic pentameter lines. During the Neoclassical period, the popular heroic couplet was also often a closed couplet, with its meaning and grammar complete within two lines.

Example: True ease in writing comes with art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learned to dance.

Alexander Pope, *Essay on Criticism*

METAPHOR: A metaphor is a figure of speech in which one thing is spoken as though it was something else. Through this identification of dissimilar things, a comparison is suggested or implied. For example, "Death, that long sleep."

MOCK EPIC: A mock epic is a poem about a trivial matter written in a style of a serious epic. For example, The Nun's Priest's Tale in *The Canterbury Tales*

NARRATION: Narration is writing that tells a story. The act of telling a story is also called narration. The narrative, or story, is told by a story teller called narrator. Narration is one of the major forms of discourses and appears in many guises. Biographies, autobiographies, journals, reports, novels, anecdotes, fables, plays and many more are all narratives.

RHYME ROYAL: It consists of seven lines usually in iambic pentameter. The rhyme scheme is a-b-a-b-b-c-c. This allows for a great deal of variety, especially when the form is used for longer narrative poems and along with the couplet, it was the standard narrative meter in the late Middle Ages. Chaucer was the first to use the rhyme royal in his poems like *Troilus and Creseide*, *Parliament of Fowls* and *Canterbury Tales*.

SIMILE: A simile is a figure of speech that compares two dissimilar things by using key words such as *like* or *as*. For example, "O my love is like a red, red rose." Robert Burns.

1.9 SUMMING UP

- In this unit you read about the Anglo Saxons, their important works and writers and the chief characteristics of their writing.
- You saw how the Normans came and with them brought the French ways of life. How with their coming the language and literature of Britain underwent a change. The unit also took up the important characteristics of the Norman writings, some important Norman writers and their works

1.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. Who were the Anglo-Saxons? Write a note on their writings.

Q2. Who were the Normans? What are the important characteristics of Norman literature?

Q3. Write a note on Chaucer's influences.

Q4. Write a short note on William Langland.

Q5. Where is Canterbury?

Q6. What is Canterbury famous for?

Q7. How many pilgrims were undertaking a pilgrimage to Canterbury in *The Canterbury Tales*?

Q8. Who was the first poet to be buried in what is now known as the Poet's Corner of Westminster Abbey?

Q9. Name three other important contemporary poets of Chaucer. Mention one important work of each poet.

Q10. What do you understand by the term literature? Explain in your own words.

1.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Questions 1, 2, 3,4, and 10 are subjective. To know the answers go through the write-up.

- A5. Kent
A6. The shrine of the martyr Thomas A Beckett
A7. 29
A8. Geoffrey Chaucer
A9. John Wycliff: Translation of the Bible
William Langland: *Piers Plowman*
Gower: *Confessio Amantis*

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1.13 SUGGESTED READING

BOOKS

1. Abrams, M.H.(ed) Norton Anthology, London, UK.: W.W. Norton and Company. Print.
2. Longman Companion to English Literature, Christopher Gille, Longman Group Limited
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SITES AND BLOGS

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1.14 TERMINAL AND MODEL QUESTIONS

- Q1. Briefly discuss the characteristics of Anglo Saxon literature.
- Q2. How did the language of the people of England witness a change with the coming of the Normans?
- Q3. Discuss Chaucer as a poet.
- Q4. Write a short note on *The Canterbury Tales*.

**UNIT 2 LITERATURE AFTER CHAUCER: FROM THE END OF
THE MIDDLE AGES TO RENAISSANCE**

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Objectives

2.3 A bird's eye view of the age

2.4 Some important movements of the period

 2.4.1 Humanism

 2.4.2 Renaissance

 2.4.3 Reformation

2.5 The literary scene of the age

 2.5.1 Poetry

 2.5.2 Prose

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 2.5.2.2 Short Stories

 2.5.2.3 Critical Works

 2.5.3 Drama: Its beginning

 2.5.3.1 Early Elizabethan Drama

 2.5.3.2 University Wits

 2.5.3.3 Shakespeare

2.6 Glossary

2.7 Let us sum up

2.8 Check your progress

2.9 Answers to Check your progress

2.10 References

2.11 Suggested Reading

2.12 Terminal and Model Questions

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit you explored the beginning of English literature, journeying through the life and literature of the early English writers. This unit will continue this fantastic literary journey and will cover the important event and movements ranging from the later Middle Ages to the blossoming of Renaissance in the English soil.

2.2 OBJECTIVES

- This unit aims at briefing you about the literary scene after Chaucer's death.
 - You will be given an insight to the various events and movements that took place in England during the Renaissance. These early movements helped in the shaping of contemporary literature and the literature of the ages to come.
 - Some significant writers and their works in various literary forms like prose, poetry and drama will also be taken up.
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2.3 A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE AGE

The death of Chaucer in 1400 brings us to the end of an era. By that time, England had already passed into the period known as the Later Middle Ages, which was a period of disturbance as England witnessed many upheavals like the War of Roses which was waged between the House of Lancaster and the House of York and was responsible for social dislocation in England. As a result of this disturbance; the fifteenth century became a period of transition in England. Due to this turbulence, the literature that was written was not creative enough and the literary scene relatively barren. Nonetheless, there were some important activities, both literary and historical, that brought about certain important changes in Britain. If we see broadly, the Middle Ages (the period between the fall of the Roman Empire of the West and the Renaissance) is mostly an uneventful period.

In the latter half of the fifteenth century, two significant events took place in England- a major breakthrough came in the year 1476, when William Caxton established the first printing press at Westminster. This resulted in mass production and proliferation of books which opened the windows to the world for general readers. Caxton published some important books including Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, *House of Fame* and *Troilus and Criseyde* and Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte D' Arthur*. The second important event that took place was Henry VII's accession to the English throne. He was the first of the House of Tudor, of Welsh origin and related to the House of Lancaster; he defeated Richard III, last of the House of York, at the battle of Bosworth(1485), the last battle of the Wars of Roses which was fought between the House of Lancaster and the House of York. He was an able monarch and after succession, won the loyalty of merchants, professional men, gentry and nobility alike, as a result of which he maintained political stability in the country. It was during his reign that two important movements gained impetus in England, the first one was Humanism and the other Renaissance. We will now be discussing these two movements briefly as these movements were responsible in many respects for dispelling the darkness of the Middle Ages and ushering in of a new era of learning and growth. Let us now read about these movements in detail.

2.4 SOME IMPORTANT MOVEMENTS OF THE PERIOD

2.4.1 HUMANISM

The word Humanism is used in two different contexts. Firstly, it is used for the intellectual and liberating movement in western Europe in the 15th and the 16th centuries and secondly, it refers to a modern movement for the advancement of humanity without dependence on supernatural religious beliefs but as we are discussing the history of the middle ages, we are,

for the time being, concerned with the Humanism that began in the Middle Ages. Let us now see how Humanism began in the Middle Ages:

Humanism was a movement that has its origins in Italy in the 14th Century. Humanists were a group of people who were students of *literae humaniores*; the literature of Greek and Latin poets, dramatists, philosophers, historians and rhetoricians. It reached its glory in 1453 after the mighty empire of Constantinople collapsed, there after the rediscovery of the lost documents of the great European classics. Humanism developed a new critical power in the minds of people, thereby bringing about an intellectual awakening of the English society. The classical languages (Latin and Greece), saw new light with the coming of Humanism. The Humanist began by critically examining Latin and Greek authors in the light of Roman and Greek standards of civilization. This resulted in intellectual independence and it led to a great zeal in research and experimentation. In its extreme form, humanism regarded man as the crown of creation, thus helping him in realizing his potentials and concentrated on perfecting man and making a truly civilized man of him. Humanism also gave importance to the individual identity of man and opposed collective identity. It further emphasised on the principle of secularism. However, the greatest of the early European Humanists, the Dutchman, Erasmus, and his English friend, Sir Thomas More were religious men. In the later centuries, humanism displayed an increasing secularism, as is evident from Alexander Pope's famous line, "The proper study of mankind is man." Today also the humanist tradition remains dominant in the field of studies that bears its name, the humanities. In the world of English literature, Chaucer can be called the first humanist, although the term did not exist in his time. His *The Prologue to The Canterbury Tales* is a good example where he exhibits his humanism. Some other English Humanists were Grocyn, Linacre and the poet Sir Thomas Wyatt.

2.4.2 RENAISSANCE (1485-1625)

The word Renaissance has been derived from Latin 'renascentia' which means 'rebirth'. The word was first used by Italian scholars in the mid-16th century to express the rediscovery of ancient Roman and Greek culture, which was now studied for its own sake and not for just to increase the authority of the Church. According to Jacob Burckhardt, the 19th century historian, Renaissance saw a miraculous rebirth of man, as it was a time when man broke the shackles of the religious trappings of the Middle Ages and emerged as a modern free man. The most characteristic feature of Renaissance was that man became the centre of things. Previously, people had unquestioning faith in God and the authority was vested in the hands of the Church, but this new awakening gave rise to a new enquiring spirit. Thus, man began to think on new grounds, questioning and challenging the existence things that were hitherto unchallenged and accepted meekly. Renaissance, as a movement, was not just confined to any one particular branch of learning. Its impact was seen in social, cultural, political, economic and scientific fields too. Various explorations and discoveries too were undertaken as a result of this free and enquiring spirit of man. Copernicus made a major breakthrough in the field of science when he proved that that it was the sun, not the earth that was at the centre of the "universe", as previously thought.

In England, Renaissance reached later than in the European mainland. It is said to have started with the accession of the first Tudor monarch, Henry VII, to the English throne in 1485 but culturally, its first important period in England was in the reign of the second Tudor monarch, Henry VIII. If we examine the English Renaissance in general, it was largely a literary movement and achieved its finest expression in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, daughter of Henry VIII. Although literature made great strides in various forms during Renaissance, it was chiefly known for Elizabethan drama, its chief exponents being the University Wits, particularly Christopher Marlowe, whose *Dr. Faustus* brilliantly exhibits the Renaissance spirit and William Shakespeare. Besides drama, non-dramatic poetry too scaled great heights in the Renaissance as Edmund Spenser, Sir Philip Sidney and John Milton emerged as important poets of the times. However,

with the publication of Milton's *Paradise Lost* this glorious period came to an end. In addition to drama and poetry, some prose was also written in this period; however, its growth was relatively slow. Sir Thomas More, the great humanist, who was also a prolific writer, wrote *Utopia*, his masterpiece in Latin, which created a new genre of utopian fiction. Sir Francis Bacon was another important prose writer of the Renaissance. Among some other important prose writers of Renaissance were Roger Ascham, Thomas North, and Richard Hooker.

2.4.3 REFORMATION

In addition to Renaissance and Humanism, another important movement that emerged in the later sixteenth century was Reformation. The aim of Reformation was to reform the malpractices that had crept in the Catholic Church. The reformers protested in a variety of ways against the conduct of the Catholic Church, which was the single European church in the medieval times. The result of this protest was the formation of two churches, namely, the Roman Catholic Church which remained dominant in the western Mediterranean countries and south Germany. The other church that came into existence was the new Protestant Church that became supreme in northern Europe. The causes of this movement were political, moral and doctrinal.

The reformation in England proceeded in the following phases:

- (i) Henry VIII, the King of England, was very ambitious. He wished to be both the temporal and religious leader of England and the only way out was to break free from the Roman Catholic Church, which he did, thereby establishing the Church of England and declared himself its head by the Act of Supremacy.
- (ii) The second phase of reformation took place under Henry VIII's son, Edward VI. In his reign the clergy were permitted to remarry. There was extensive destruction of religious images in church throughout the country. His daughter Mary I undertook a complete reaction back to Catholicism, but her persecution of the Protestants and her subservience to her husband, Philip II of Spain, the most fanatical of the Catholic sovereigns, confirmed the country in a Protestant direction.
- (iii) The third and the most important phase of Reformation was carried out by Henry's other daughter Elizabeth I. She carefully planned a religious settlement that was carefully compromised between the reforms of her father and those of her brother.

In other words, she tried to make a compromise between the Catholics and the Protestants through the Act of Settlement. However, this resulted in disunion as the Catholics could not subscribe to the Church of England after the Pope had excommunicated the Queen in 1571, and the more extreme Protestants wanted further reforms. Queen Elizabeth's settlement was vague and it gave rise to disagreement within the Church of England which has lasted till date.

In a nutshell, Reformation was a sixteenth century religious movement that rejected the authority of the Roman Catholic Church. It resulted in the establishment of Protestantism which led to a number of political and social changes in European history,

The above mentioned movements had a profound impact on the writers of the period. Keeping the above mentioned movements in mind, let us now examine some important literary developments of this period.

2.5 THE LITERARY SCENE OF THE PERIOD

Renaissance period saw the growth of various forms of literature including prose, poetry and drama. Now you will be studying about the growth of these various literary forms and the contribution made by the various men of letters in detail.

2.5.1 POETRY

With the passing of literary giants, Chaucer, Gower, Langland of the previous century, the fifteenth century looked forward apprehensively to a new age. Christopher Gilli, in Longman's Companion to English Literature says it is very hard to distinguish between a poet of the later Middle Ages with that of the Renaissance. During this time, a lot of men of letters, who were deeply influenced by Chaucer, came to fame. The chief among them were John Lydgate and Thomas Hoccleve. Hoccleve, a minor civil servant, a connoisseur of London night life and a tavern hunter, is chiefly known for his poem *Male Regle*. Lydgate, a monk, is remembered for his over one hundred, forty-five thousand surviving lines of his monumental work *Fall of Princes* (from a French prose version of Boccaccio's *De Casibus Illustrium Virorum*), which can be considered the first collection of "tragedies" in English. His enormous work called *Troy-Book* is also a well known book. Lydgate is at his best known for his shorter poems. A good example of this is his poem "The Churl and the Bird."

Among other well known poets of this period are, for example, Stephen Hawes, Alexander Barclay, John Skelton, Edmund Spenser, Thomas Churchyard, George Gascoigne, Sir Philip Sidney, John Donne and John Milton. You will now read about these poets and some of their important works briefly.

Stephen Hawes is known for his allegorical romances *The Passtime of Pleasure*, and *The Example of Virtue*. Alexander Barclay's *Ship of Fools* can be considered one of the first examples of English satire. Satire was taken a step further by John Skelton, one of the most interesting and original of all the transitional poets, whose comic satire *Bowge of Court* (1509) is an allegory in the morality tradition. His *Colin Clout*, another satirical work, derides the vices of the clergy.

During these times, the pastorals also became a vehicle for satire in English. Barclay produced five eclogues, out of which three were classical translations. It was through these classical translations that English literature saw the blossoming of pastorals. Although, it was Barclay who introduced eclogues in English literature, it was exploited to the fullest and made popular with the publication of Spenser's *Shepherd's Calender*, the poem responsible for setting a fashion for pastorals in England. Edmund Spenser (1552-99) was the first poet to encapsulate the hopes of the Elizabethan Age. He can be well compared with the Homer and Virgil, poets who glorified Greece and Rome respectively, through their poems. Spenser's major work, *The Faerie Queen*, an unfinished romance, originally designed in twelve books, still remains a monumental work in English literature. It tells us of the human virtues like faith, love, friendship and the like, in the form of allegory, giving to each virtue a special knight or protector, and presenting in Gloriana (the Faerie Queen, representing Queen Elizabeth I) the glory which comes from possession of these virtues. Another famous poem by Spenser is *Epithalamion* or 'marriage-song' written by him for his own bride. Thomas Churchyard (ca. 1520-1604) George Gascoigne (ca. 1525-77), George Turberville and George Whetstone (ca. 1544-87) made important contributions in the early Tudor period. Churchyard is chiefly known for his lyric collection *Churchyard's Chips* and also for his plays *The Supposes*, a prose translation of a comedy by Aristo. It is the earliest extant comedy in English prose. His blank verse tragedy *Jacosta*, translated from the Italian of Ludovico Dolce's *Giocasta*, with the collaboration of Francis Kinwelmersh is also a well known work. George Whetstone, another famous writer of that period wrote miscellaneous verses extensively but he is mainly known for his unacted play in two parts, *Promos and Cassandre*,

which provided the plot for Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. One of the most ambitious books to be written in the Tudor period is *A Mirror for Magistrates*, which is a collection of English poems by various authors. It tells the lives and the tragic ends of various historical figures. It is a didactic work intended originally as a continuation of Lydgate's *Falls of Princes* (itself derived from Boccaccio's *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium*.)

Another name to reckon with, in the field of poetry, was Sir Philip Sidney (1554-86). He was a poet, courtier, soldier and statesman. Sidney's writings date mostly from the period 1580-83. His most famous poetry, the sonnet sequence, *Astrophil and Stella*, was published in 1591 and inspired a number of sonnet sequences including Shakespeare's. Apart from his sonnets, Sidney's poetic reputation rests on his pastoral romance, *Arcadia*. Sidney has also authored a critical essay called *Apology for Poetry* which aims at defending the art of poetry against accusations of moral harmfulness made by the Puritans.

Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503-42) and Henry Howard, the Earl of Surrey (1517-47), were two important sonneteers who wrote in the Tudor period for it was these two poets who introduced the sonnet in English literature. ("Sonnet" is discussed in detail in the block dealing with critical terms on poetry. Please refer to this block in order to understand sonnet in detail.) The experiments of Wyatt and Surrey were made popularized through *Tottel's Miscellany*, an influential anthology of verse published by Richard Tottel, a bookseller, and Nicholas Grimald, a translator and scholar. Both Wyatt and Howard were diplomats and not men of literature. As mentioned earlier, they were mere experimenters of this form of poetry writing and it took a genius like Shakespeare to develop the sonnet form. Shakespeare wrote 154 sonnets. The first 126 out of these sonnets are addressed to a man (the 126th one is not a sonnet but a 12-line poem) and the remaining sonnets are addressed to a woman referred to as the 'Dark Lady'. The real identity of the 'Dark Lady' is not known, but one can conjure by the title given to her by Shakespeare that she was probably a lady with dark hair and a relatively dark complexion. Shakespeare's sonnets were quite different from the sonnets written in Italy: he used his sonnets not solely for the description of his loved ones but also used it for the expression of ideas unlike the other contemporaries of Shakespeare like Sir Philip Sidney, Samuel Daniel, Spenser and Michael Drayton, who were content with the theme of love in its more conventional aspects. Not only has Shakespeare written sonnets but has also written two powerful narrative poems- *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*.

John Milton (1608-74): Milton was a poet and a prose polemicist. His literary career can be divided into three phases. In the first phase (1625-40) he wrote a great deal of verse in Latin and some in English which includes *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, *L'Allegro* and *L'Penseroso*, the masque *Comus* and the elegy *Lycidas*. In the second phase (1640-60), Milton produced a considerable amount of prose treatises and pamphlets which include *Aeropagitica*, *a Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing*, *On the Last Massacre in Piedmont* and a Treatise of Education. In the final phases, (1660-74), after turning blind, Milton produced the monumental *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*. The most important influence upon him in English was Spenser, but his early poetry shows the influence of English dramatist (in *Comus*) and of the Metaphysical Poets (in the early *Ode*). Milton is often considered to be the last Renaissance man as with the coming out of his *Paradise Lost*, in the year 1660, the Renaissance period came to a close.

2.5.2 PROSE

Prose in the sixteenth century made notable changes. The first body of prose that was written then came out in the form of translations of Greek, Latin, French and Italian classics. The finest among the translations is the one from the Hebrew as well as the Greek Bibles into the English one. The main translators of this Bible were William Tyndale and Miles Coverdale. One

of the leading humanists of the times, Sir Thomas More (1480-1535), was another important prose writer of this age. He is well known for his most imaginative work, written in Latin, called *Utopia*. In Greek, the word Utopia means 'nowhere'. The book tells of an imaginary island where everything is perfect. Sir Thomas More was a pioneer in the field of history writing, well known for his *Life and Reign of Edward V*. His *History of King Richard III* (1513) has been called the first masterpiece of history and biography in English. The most influential of the Italian "courtesy books", i.e. Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* was translated by Sir Thomas Hoby in 1561.

John Lyly was another major prose romance writer of this period. His *Eupheus, or the Anatomy of Wit* (1578) and *Eupheus and his England* are mainly pretexts for sophisticated discussions of contemporary manners and modes in a style. The artificiality of style, which John Lyly's *Eupheus* is known for, and is now regarded as a fault, was at that time considered a virtue of high cultivation. Sir Philip Sidney (1554-86) a soldier, poet and scholar wrote *Arcadia*, a long prose romance with a loose plot which has a number of additional tales.

As mentioned earlier, the English prose began with translations. Apart from the religious translations, some secular translations were also made. The chief among them were Sir Thomas North's version of the *Lives* of Plutarch, made in 1579 and Philemon Holland's rendering of the *Lives of the Twelve Caesars* by Suetonius made in 1606. An important translation is from the French was Florio's depiction of the *Essais* of Montaigne, the Father of Essay. Montaigne influenced a considerable number of essayists, the greatest of them being Sir Francis Bacon, the Father of English essays. Most of Bacon's writings are in Latin as he thought Latin to be a language with a bright future ahead. Nonetheless, he wrote some of his books in English too, the chief among them being his *Essays*. In the words of Anthony Burgess, "These are brief, pithy, observations on a variety of subjects-death, revenge, reading, gardens, education and so on- and we get an impression of ideas rapidly jotted down, ideas which have no place in a big philosophical work but, nevertheless, are worth recording. These essays are simple, strong, admirably clear and concise, and many statements are as memorable as lines of poetry." It is for this reason that his essays are called "dispersed meditations." Richard Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, is a book on mental ailment (neurosis). It is an enormous work of over half-a-million words. It is said that the best prose works written in the sixteenth century were on education. For example, Thomas Elyot's *Governor* (1531) and Roger Ascham's *The Schoolmaster* (pub 1570). Besides translations and books on education, prose pamphleteering (the earliest form of journalism) and the kind of romance known as Elizabethan novel, of which Thomas Nashe, Thomas Lodge and Thomas Deloney were the foremost practitioners, were also in vogue.

2.5.2.1 RELIGIOUS WORKS

Among religious prose works are the early translations of the Bible by Wycliff, Tyndale and Coverdale. Coverdale was the producer of the Great Bible (also called Cranmer's Bible after the archbishop of the time) which was the first official Bible of England commissioned by the Church of England in the reign of Henry VIII. The second official Bible was The Bishop's Bible which came out in 1568 but the most monumental achievement of the Renaissance was the English translation of the Bible commissioned by King James on the advice of protestant clergymen. It was as a result of the effort put by fifty-four scholars for three years that this magnificent work bore fruit in the form of **The King James Bible** also known as the **Authorized Version** which is among the most widely quoted and influential works in the English language.

Besides the Bible, another important religious book that came out was *Books of Martyrs* by John Foxe which gave an appalling account of the deaths of Protestants at the hands of the Catholic persecutors. *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* by Richard Hooker was the first outstanding polemic expounding of the Church of England and its main purpose was to defend the Church of England against attacks by other Protestant reformers.

2.5.2.2 SHORT STORIES

Till now you were given an account of the major prose writers of the period. But besides colossal prose works, this period also produced some interesting prose stories. These stories contain the germ of one of the most popular literary forms of writings, i.e. the novel. Some of the important stories written during this age are *The Unfortunate Traveller or the Life of Jacke Wilton* by Thomas Nashe, which is a lurid tale of a rogue in the army of Henry VIII. Standing in contrast to *The Unfortunate Traveller* is the homely story about life in the weaving trade given in *Jack of Newbury* by Thomas Deloney.

2.5.2.3 CRITICAL WORKS

The early Tudor period also saw the beginning of critical essays. George Gascoigne's *Certain Notes of Instruction Concerning the Making of Verse or Rhyme in English* is a pioneer critical essay on English prosody. Another important critic of the time was George Puttenham whose *The Arte of English Poesie* is an extremely influential book on poetry and rhetoric.

2.5.3 DRAMA: ITS BEGINNING

Drama was the most important literary form that blossomed in the Middle Ages in England. Its initiation and development are noteworthy as the theatre of Wordsworth had its roots in the drama of the Middle Ages. It was during the early Norman times that the church often sponsored plays as part of religious services. The actors were mainly churchmen, but gradually these plays moved from the church to the churchyard and then to the market place, as a result of which drama became secular. In the context of drama, secularization means that participation of non-religious people. The earliest dramas were the miracle plays. The term Miracle Play is often used to cover all the religious plays of the Middle Ages. The Miracle Plays dealt with the lives of saints. In addition to the Miracle Plays, there were Mystery plays also. The Mysteries took themes from the Bible. As mentioned earlier, secular subjects were slowly making their way into drama through the Morality plays. The Morality Plays, as the name suggests, emphasized on teaching a moral lesson through allegory. A good example of the Morality play is *Everyman*. This is a translation from the Dutch *Elckerlijck* and it tells of the appearance of Death to Everyman (who stands for every one) and his informing Everyman that he must commence the long journey into the next world. Other Morality plays like *The World and the Child*, *Hickscorner* and *Youth* too like *Everyman* are about reforming vice by acquiring wisdom. In the last days of the fifteenth century, another form of Morality Plays came into existence, these were the interludes. According to Anthony Burgess, "The main difference (between the Morality Plays and the Interludes) seems to lie, not in theme, but in place and occasion of performance." Interludes were short, lighter plays, often having no didactic purpose. The interludes were meant to be performed in the middle of something else, usually feasts. They can thus, be called a minor entertainment, whereas Morality Plays were plays which had more significance as they were not incidental like the Interludes. One of the most entertaining interlude dramatists was John Heywood who is well known for his plays like *The Four P's* and *Play of the Weather*. (To know more on drama, please refer to the block on drama.)

2.3.5.1 THE EARLY ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

The early Elizabethan drama has its origin in the Inns of Courts of London where gentlemen who practiced law tried to copy Seneca, the Roman rhetorician and writer, in their leisure time. Seneca influenced the Elizabethan writers immensely. The first English tragedy, *Gorbuduc* by Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville, owes much to Seneca, including the dialogue form which makes use of the Blank Verse. Like early Elizabethan tragedy, the early Elizabethan comedy also owes to the Roman playwrights. Nicholas Udall (1505-56), headmaster successively of Eton and Westminster schools, was deeply influenced by the Roman playwrights, Terence and

Plautus. His play, *Ralph Roister Doister*, which is regarded as the first English comedy, owes much to Plautus. Related to *Ralph Roister Doister* is *Grammar Gurton's Needle* a farcical tale which was probably written by a Cambridge scholar, William Stevenson. It too borrows its plot skillfully from Roman comedians. The drama form, both tragedy and comedy, was gradually growing in popularity. Its secularization gave rise to a new class of dramatists who were secular professional playwrights. This group of writers was the University Wits who were the predecessor of Shakespeare and greatly influence on his drama.

2.3.5.2 THE UNIVERSITY WITS

The University Wits were a group of young scholars from either the Oxford or the Cambridge University, who wrote during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. They were men of learning and talent but with no money. They University Wits were as follows:

- John Lyly (1554?-1606): He was a dramatist and writer. He started his literary career as the author of a very popular novel called *Euphues*. (The book has been discussed above in the section on prose.)
- George Peele (1558?-97?): He was a dramatist and wrote one of the most wonderful of the pre-Shakespearean comedies-*The Old Wives' Tales*. This work is one of the earliest attempts at dramatic satire on those romantic tales of enchantment and chivalry that were popular in England. Peele also wrote tragedies and histories. He wrote an interesting Biblical play on David and Bathsheba.
- Robert Greene (1558-92): Green was a dramatist who is known for his plays *Friar Bacon* and *Friar Bungay*. His clearly defined plots, sub-plots and the use of clown remind us of Shakespeare's early comedies. Besides comedies, he also wrote histories and tragedies.
- Thomas Lodge: Thomas Lodge was chiefly a poet and a man of letters. His first work was a pamphlet entitled *The Defence of Plays*. Besides pamphlets, he wrote prose romances, verse romances, a sonnet sequence (*Phyllis*, 1593), a collection of epistles and satires in imitation of the Roman poet Horace. He also wrote plays and even collaborated with playwrights, for example a chronicle play, *The Wounds of Civil War* (printed in 1594) and, probably with Greene in *a Looking Glass for London and England*. (1594)
- Thomas Nashe: He was a pamphleteer, poet, playwright and a prose writer who is chiefly known for his prose writings especially prose and in particular prose romance. The most important feature of Nashe's prose is abundance in energy. Among his best known books are *The Unfortunate Traveller or the Life of Jacke Wilton*. It is one of the outstanding romances of the decade. His *Pierce Penniless, His Supplication to the Devil* (1592) is his well known satire.
- Christopher Marlowe: Marlowe was mainly a dramatist and poet par excellence. However, it was tragic that the life of this talented writer was cut short as he was stabbed to death, in a brawl that took place in a London inn. The mystery behind this tragic end of Marlowe could never be understood fully. His four major plays, *Tamburlaine the Great, Parts 1 and 2, The Jew of Malta, The Tragic History of Dr. Faustus and Edward II*, were written between 1587 and 1593. His famous non-dramatic poetry is *Hero and Leander*. Marlowe had a considerable influence on the works of Shakespeare. He was a champion of the blank verse form to which he gave suppleness and power which remains unmatched till date.
- Thomas Kyd: Kyd was a dramatist and is often associated with the University Wits despite the fact that he never attended either of the two universities- Cambridge and

Oxford. He is mainly known for his *Spanish Tragedy* (?1589), the first important revenge tragedy in English. Kyd is especially important to the students of Shakespeare for it is supposed that he wrote the earlier version of the Hamlet story which Shakespeare used as a base for his own masterpiece.

2.3.5.3 WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE- THE DRAMATIST

In the sub-section on poetry, you read about Shakespeare as a sonneteer. But, as you must be well aware, that world knew him more as a dramatist than a sonneteer, so let us now look at Shakespeare, the dramatist. Shakespeare, no doubt, was one of the greatest dramatists of all times. Have you ever wondered why his name is so well known the world over? Shakespeare had a deep understanding of human nature, he was compassionate towards one and all and the beauty of his language had the power to mesmerize people, his themes are universal as a result of which his plays are appreciated by people of all times and all places. Ben Jonson rightly paid homage to Shakespeare on his death when he said, "He was not of an age but for all times."

Shakespeare was born in a small country town, Stratford-on-Avon, in April 1564. After spending his early years in Stratford-on-Avon, Shakespeare moved to London where he took up various odd jobs before becoming an actor. Gradually he developed a reputation as an actor and by 1594, Shakespeare was a part owner and the most important playwright of the Lord Chamberlain's Men, one of the most successful companies in London. In 1599, the company built the famous Globe theatre, where most of Shakespeare's plays were performed. Later on, after the death of Queen Elizabeth I, with James I's accession, the company was renamed The King's Men. Around the year 1610, Shakespeare retired to Stratford, where he continued writing plays until his death on 23 April 1616. He was buried in the Holy Trinity Church in Stratford.

Shakespeare has written innumerable plays, ranging from tragedy to romance, to histories to tragic comedies. He wrote plays to be performed not published. Hence, no one knows for certain, the exact dates of his plays. Nonetheless, scholars have researched extensively, and have divided Shakespeare's works into various periods. It is said that during his early years, through most of the 1590s Shakespeare wrote a number of comedies including *The Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *a Mid-Summer Night's Dream*, several histories including *Richard II*, *Richard III* and *Henry IV* and two tragedies *Titus Andronicus* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

Shakespeare then wrote several of his finest romantic comedies like *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night* and *Much Ado About Nothing*. His greatest tragedies, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus* were written in the first decade of the seventeenth century. During his twilight days, he wrote several plays which came to be known as "tragic-comedies." This category includes *The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline* and *The Tempest*.

2.6 GLOSSARY

Calvinism: The religious doctrines and practices from John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536). The most characteristic feature of Calvinism is its concept of predestination, the belief that the salvation or the damnation of each person is predetermined by God. Calvinism originated in Geneva and later on spread to Scotland and England and later was brought to America by the Puritans.

Euphuism: The term Euphuism is derived from the Greek word Euphuos meaning "graceful and witty." It was a peculiar manner of English prose style which was popularized after two prose romances by John Lyly, *Euphuos: The Anatomy of Wit* and *Eupheus and his England*. In these works, Lyly employs a highly artificial and mannered style and makes use of a wide range of literary devices. In this style of writing, the plots are unimportant and exist merely as structural

elements on which to display conversations, discourses and letters mostly concerning the subject of love. Euphuism was fashionable in the 1580s, especially in the Elizabethan court, but never before or since.

Clergy: all persons in holy order

Puritan: member of extreme English Protestant party regarding Reformation as incomplete. ; person of extreme strictness in religion or morals

Polemicist: someone who writes newspaper articles or books that express very strong opinions

Didactic: meant or meaning to instruct

Allegory: narrative describing one subject under guise of another

Eclogue: poem of rural life

Courtesy books: books on courteous behavior and disposition

Blank Verse: Blank Verse is poetry written in unrhymed iambic pentameter lines. Each iambic foot has one weakly stressed syllable followed by one strongly stressed syllable. A pentameter line has five of these feet.

Tragi-Comedy: As its name implies, Tragi-Comedy is half tragedy and half comedy, mingled harmoniously together. It is distinct from tragedy that contains comic relief and from comedy that has a potentially tragic background. For example, the function of the Porter in *Macbeth* acts as a comic relief in the tragedy *Macbeth*.

2.7 LET US SUM UP

- In this unit you got an insight into the major literary and historical movements, namely Humanism, Renaissance and Reformation, of the age.
 - You also explored the impact of the above mentioned movements in the age in general and literature in particular.
 - The unit also traced the growth of the various literary forms, prose, poetry and drama during this period.
-

2.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. Give an account of the general scene in literature after the death of Chaucer?

Q2. Who were the University Wits? Give an account of any three of the University Wits.

Q3. Discuss the arrival of the sonnet form in England.

Q4. What do you know about the Authorized Version of the Bible?

Q5. Discuss William Shakespeare as a dramatist.

Q6. Write short notes on the following poets:

(a) Edmund Spenser

(b) Sir Philip Sidney

Q7. Write short notes on the following:

(a) Tragi-Comedy

(b) Blank Verse

Q8. What is the meaning of the word 'Renaissance'?

Q9. Who introduced the sonnet form into English?

Q10. Match the following:

Col. A

Col. B

Thomas More

Eupheus

John Lyly

Paradise Lost

Edmund Spenser *Arcadia*

Sir Philip Sidney *Utopia*

John Milton

Faerie Queen

Q11. Who is the author of *The Unfortunate Traveller*?

Q12. Which play is regarded as the first English comedy?

Q13. Name the University Wits.

Q14. Name two of Shakespeare's Tragi-comedies.

Q15. What is the King James Bible also known as?

2.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Questions 1 to 7 are subjective. To know the answers go through the write-up.

A8. Rebirth

A9. Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey

A10. Thomas More

Utopia

John Lyly

Eupheus

Edmund Spenser

Faerie Queen

Sir Philip Sidney

Arcadia

John Milton

Paradise Lost

A11. Thomas Nashe

A12. *Ralph Royster Doyster*

A13. Christopher Marlowe. George Peele, John Lyly, Robert Greene, Thomas Lodge, Thomas Nashe and Thomas Kyd.

A14. *The Tempest, Cymbeline*

A15. The Authorised Version

2.10 REFERENCES

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2. Gillie, Christopher. Longman Companion to English Literature, London, UK.: Longman Group Limited. Print.

3. Abrams, M.H.(ed) Norton Anthology, London, UK.: W.W. Norton and Company. Print.

4. The English Tradition. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, USA.: Prentice Hall. Print.

2.11 SUGGESTED READING

1. Burgess, Anthony. English Literature a Survey for Students, London, UK.: Longman Group Limited. Print.

2. Gillie, Christopher. Longman Companion to English Literature, London, UK.: Longman Group Limited. Print.

3. Abrams, M.H.(ed) Norton Anthology, London, UK.: W.W. Norton and Company. Print.

4. The English Tradition. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, USA.: Prentice Hall. Print.

2.12 TERMINAL AND MODEL QUESTIONS

Q1. Write short notes on the following:

- (i) Humanism
- (ii) Renaissance
- (iii) Humanism

Q2. Write a note on the development of prose during the Renaissance.

Q3. Explain the following terms briefly.

- (i) Puritan
- (ii) Eclogue
- (iii) Blank Verse
- (iv) Tragi Comedy

UNIT 3 17TH & 18TH CENTURY LITERATURE

3.1 Introduction

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3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit you read about the major movements of the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries namely Humanism, Renaissance and Reformation, and their impact across the continent of Europe. You saw how these movements were instrumental in shaping the ideas and events of the times and how they brought about a change in the medieval habits of thought and replaced them with new ideas. This unit will focus on some important historical and literary movements of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries and explore their impact on the age in general and literature in particular.

3.2 OBJECTIVES

The aim of this unit is to provide an overview of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, discuss some major historical and literary movements of the ages and trace their impact on the literature written during the ages so that you are familiar with the literary trends and developments of the times.

3.3 A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE AGE

In the last unit we saw the flowering of literature in the Golden age of Elizabeth. Looking back, we see the English Renaissance as a time when remarkable achievements were made in various fields. However, it is difficult to believe that the next century witnessed turbulence, as it was full of religious and political conflicts, which in turn reflected in the literature of the age. Before we proceed into the literature of this century, let us briefly examine the general scene of England at that time.

3.3.1. The defeat of the Spanish Armada

One of the most significant events that took place around the last quarter of the sixteenth century was the invasion of the Spanish Armada, the Spanish fleet that sailed against England, dispatched by Philip II of Spain under the command of Duke of Medina Sidonia in 1588, with the intention of overthrowing Queen Elizabeth I. The coming of the Spanish Armada was of great importance for the following among other reasons:

- (i) England had a rapidly growing sense of national identity and this grew more under the stalwart ship of Queen Elizabeth I, against whom the invasion attempt was specifically aimed.
- (ii) As you saw in the previous unit, that Henry VIII broke free from the Roman Catholic Church and established the Church of England, and with that England became the most important country to renounce papal authority. Her defeat would have been disastrous to the Protestant side in its struggle against the Catholic powers, of which Spain was then the chief.

The Spanish Armada was defeated and the English victory was a milestone in the shift of power from the Mediterranean region to the Atlantic powers of England, France and Holland, which henceforth increasingly led the European expansion over the globe. With the removal of the threat of the Catholic Spain, whose one mission was to re-impose Catholicism on Protestant England, England began to split into two warring camps. This division did not seem very dangerous under Queen Elizabeth, but under James I (from the Scottish House of Stuart) and thereafter his son Charles I, the situation worsened, finally flaring up in the form of a Civil War. On the one hand were the conservatives who derived their wealth from the land, from old estates and they supported monarchy and the established religion of England.

On the other hand, were those whose livelihood came from trade and they were the people who belonged to towns and wanted a greater share in the government of the country and who thought that the reformation in England had not progressed well. These men were known as **Puritan** and they were those Protestant reformers who rejected Queen Elizabeth's religious settlement of 1560 which sought a middle way between Roman Catholicism and the extreme spirit of reform of Geneva. The Puritans opposed Roman Catholicism and insisted on simplicity in religious forms. In other words, they wanted a purer form of Christianity to prevail in the country. Hence, they were known as Puritans. Puritanism was very strong in the first half of the 17th century. The Puritans were disgruntled with the King (Charles I) and his ally, Archbishop Laud, who had increased the persecution of the Puritans. The Puritans opposed the King and his allies and opposed the idea of "divine right" of the king to rule and when in the year 1642, the first Civil War broke out, supported the Parliament.

3.3.2 The Civil Wars and Restoration

The seventeenth century witnessed the Great Rebellion, fought between the supporters of King Charles I, called the Cavaliers and the Parliament. It is divided into the First Civil War (1642 – '46) ending with the Parliamentary victory at Naseby (1646) and the capitulation of Oxford (1646), the royalist capital. The Second Civil War (1648 – 51) also ended with parliamentary victory, this time over the Scots, who had been the allies of Parliament in the first Civil War, but took the king's side in the second. Finally, the radicals brought King Charles I to trial and he was beheaded on January 1, 1649. With that, monarchy was declared to be over and England pronounced a republic, but soon Oliver Cromwell, the leader of the revolt, imposed dictatorship and maintained a tight rein on the country. After the execution of Charles I, many subjects had turned against Parliament. Furthermore, the English people were disgruntled by the severe policies of the Puritans. The many dissidents in the country forced Cromwell to give up the republican government so finally in 1653, he dissolved Parliament and named himself Lord Protector. He ruled as a director until his death in 1658, when his son became Lord Protector. By then the English people were exhausted as a result of endless taxations, violence and disorder. Finally Parliament asked Charles II to become king. In 1660, monarchy was restored.

3.4 LITERATURE OF A TURBULENT AGE (1625 – 1660)

During the years from 1625 to 1660, England suffered with tremendous political and religious unrest. As you read earlier, shortly after Charles I inherited the throne in 1625, he entangled himself in a power struggle with the Members of Parliament who opposed his efforts to restrict the powers of the Parliament. Charles I's continuous suppression of the Puritans also aroused anger among many of the Puritan Parliamentarians. This, as you saw earlier, resulted in a Civil War which brought about the downfall of monarchy in 1649 and thereafter set in the period of interregnum. This was a period of disturbance.. The literature of the turbulent years from 1625 to 1660 reflects the changing conditions of the time. The writers of this period can be divided mainly into two groups: the Metaphysical Poets and the Sons of Ben. The Metaphysical Poets were known for their intellectual verse, full with complex, elaborate and striking comparisons, whereas the Sons of Ben, led by Ben Jonson, were known for precise, witty and elegant poetry. Furthermore, they relied on classical poetic forms and often used allusions in their works. However, John Milton, the most significant writer of this period, did not fit into either of these categories as he drew upon a number of literary traditions, making extensive use of metaphors and allusions. Let us now read about these writers in detail.

3.4.1 The Schools of Ben Jonson and John Donne:

Ben Jonson(1572-1637) was a poet and a distinguished contemporary dramatist of Shakespeare. Not only was Ben Jonson a contemporary of Shakespeare but also his most notable rival. Out of his sixteen surviving plays, two are tragedies and fourteen comedies. Some of his

well known comedies are *Volpone*, *The Alchemist*, *Epicoene*, or *The Silent Woman*, *Bartholomew Fair* and *Every Man in his Humour*. Jonson was a man of tradition as much as he was of his age. In him we see a blend of both tradition and contemporariness. On the one hand, he was a strong traditionalist who cared for culture, civilization and tradition and on the other hand he was a moral satirist who tried to cure society of its maladies through his comedies in which he aimed at correcting the ‘humours’ (manias, obsessions) to which society in general and men in particular were prone. One can notice the influence of the classicists in Jonson’s works. He is an important link with the next phase of English neo-classicism- that began in 1660 and lasted throughout the 18th century. Besides drama Johnson produced excellent non-dramatic poetry as well. In his poems we find a harmonious blending of the grace of manner of the love poets and the masculine strength of the Metaphysical Poets. Ben Jonson took seriously the role of poet and after him, the poets of the seventeenth century who were influenced by him, came to be known as **the Sons of Ben**. The Sons of Ben were known for their precise, witty and elegant poetry. Among the best known Sons of Ben were Robert Herrick, Sir John Suckling and Richard Lovelace, who were also known as **Cavalier Poets** since they were identified with the king’s cause.

John Donne (1572?-1631) was another great poet whose name deserves mention. He was a poet and writer of sermons and devotions. As a poet, Donne is the originator of the Metaphysical School of Poetry. Donne also experimented with the sonnet form and mainly used it to compose religious poetry. His *Holy Sonnets* are written in a combination of the Italian and the Shakespearean forms. Among his other notable works are, his collection of love lyrics, *Songs and Sonnets*, *The Litany* and *Anniversaries*.

3.4.1.1 Metaphysical School of Poetry

The term “Metaphysical” in poetry was first used by Dr. Johnson, who borrowed it from Dryden’s phrase about Donne’s poetry and said that Donne’s poetry affects the “metaphysics”, thereby meaning that in his poems Donne strove to express things in a way that was far beyond the natural way of expressing things. If we break the word “Metaphysical”, and see its literal meaning, it is made up of two words “meta” which means “beyond” and “physical” which means “earthly”, thus, Metaphysical Poetry is the poetry which was far beyond the physical or the earthly, thereby meaning that it deviated from naturalness of thought and style to a way of expression that was unique and strange.

The Metaphysical style was established by John Donne early in the seventeenth century. Later, he inspired a number of followers, the most notable among whom were Sir John Suckling, John Cleveland, George Herbert, Richard Crashaw, Henry Vaughan and Abraham Cowley.

Characteristics of the Metaphysical School:

- (a) Delight in new thought and expression: The Metaphysical School of Poets wished to convey their ideas in a novel way. They did not want to use the common expressions that were used by the poets hitherto. For example, in the poem, “A Valediction Forbidding Mourning”, John Donne compares the “twin souls” of the separated lovers to a pair two legs of a pair of compasses which are fixed together and cannot function without each other.
- (b) Far-fetched images: The Metaphysical Poets made use of fanciful images to make comparisons. The Metaphysical Poets were men of learning and exploited various fields of knowledge, science as well as nature to link various objects. For example, in the poem “The Flea”, John Donne compares a flea to a marriage bed because the flea first sucked on his blood and then his beloved’s thereby, mingling the bloods of the two lovers.

- (c) Affectation and Hyperbole: Hyperbole (exaggeration) is one of the favourite devices used by the Metaphysical Poets. However, we should remember that in good metaphysical poetry, the hyperbole is never superficial. For example, Andrew Marvell opens his poem "To His Coy Mistress" with the line "Had we but world enough and time.", thereby expressing the state of mind of a desperate lover.
- (d) Obscurity: Metaphysical Poetry, because of excessive use of far-fetched images, and its novelty, sometimes becomes hard to comprehend. At times two contradictory ideas are so yoked together, that it looks unnatural and becomes very hard for the reader to grasp and mystifies the mind of an ordinary reader.
- (e) Learning: The Metaphysical Poets were men of learning as a result their works are laden with scholarly ideas. The Metaphysical Poets explored all fields of knowledge and used the ideas taken from the various fields in their poems as a result of which their poems are loaded with meanings.

3.4.2 The Puritan Writers

3.4.2.1 John Milton (1608-74)

Milton was a poet and a prose polemicist. It is said of him that in him the streams of Renaissance and the Reformation flow together. Like Ben Jonson, he was a learned disciple of Greek and Latin authors but unlike Elizabethan humanists and other Cavalier poets, Milton was a Calvinist who studied the Old Testament in Hebrew and made interpretations of his own. Furthermore, he was an ardent Puritan but "his poetry is one of the great climaxes of English Renaissance art." His literary career can be divided into three phases. In the first phase (1625-40) he wrote a great deal of verse in Latin and some in English which includes *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, *L'Allegro* and *L'Penseroso*, the masque *Comus* and the elegy *Lycidas*. In the second phase (1640-60), Milton produced a considerable amount of prose treatises and pamphlets which include *Aeropagitica*, *a Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing*, *On the Last Massacre in Piedmont* and a *Treatise of Education*. In his second phase as a writer, Milton supported the Commonwealth and Protectorate and even defended the execution of Charles I and defended the cause of the Puritans. During this time he also participated in the pamphlet wars and became a leading exponent of republican principles. As a result of his brilliant writings, Oliver Cromwell appointed him as the Latin Secretary of the Commonwealth. However, as Cromwell's rule turned into a dictatorship, Milton's high hopes of a just society came crashing down. Upon Restoration of monarchy, he was imprisoned but released later on. It was by this time that Milton had completely turned blind and thus, in the final phases, (1660-74), after turning blind completely, Milton tried to seek answers to suffering and unhappiness in this world through his monumental epic *Paradise Lost*, which was published in the year 1667. *Paradise Lost* is a heroic epic that gives an account of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden and also "justifies the ways of God to men." (As stated in *Paradise Lost* Book 1). Besides *Paradise Lost*, he also wrote two more masterpiece namely *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*. The most important influence upon him in English was Spenser, but his early poetry shows the influence of English dramatist (in *Comus*) and of the Metaphysical Poets (in the early *Ode*).

3.4.2.2 John Bunyan (1628-88)

John Bunyan was the author of the greatest English allegory, *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The allegory is related to his own spiritual experience described in his spiritual autobiography *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666). Bunyan was a man of humble origin and had little education. He was a tinker by trade and wandered from town to town in rural England, preaching wherever people listened. He was a Puritan and also fought in the Civil War of which

not much is known. After the restoration of Charles II, Bunyan was imprisoned and it was in prison that he wrote *Pilgrim's Progress*, one of the most widely read books in England, as it was one of the most successful Christian texts written by an Englishman. It was translated to over a hundred languages. Bunyan was an outstanding storyteller. His mastery lies in his humour which was coupled with clarity of expression. His works are loaded with Biblical references.

3.5 THE RESTORATION

The year 1660 was a very significant year for England as it was the year in which monarchy was restored. Soon after Oliver Cromwell's death in 1658, Parliament offered crown to the exiled son of Charles II. After Charles II was restored, gradually, the religious conflicts that sparked off the Civil War settled and the people could now look forward to a period of stability, order and progress.

Charles II had lived in Paris during the Interregnum. Paris was the fashion capital of the world as a result of an upbringing there; Charles II enjoyed leading a luxurious life. Charles II was a shrewd ruler and a man of low personal morals. Nonetheless, he was also one of the most intelligent kings in the English history. He was an avid patron of the arts and promoted various artists and composers. His court was a centre of culture and wit. He encouraged the scientific spirit of the age by chartering the Royal Society, devoted to the study of natural science.

3.6 THE GLORIOUS REVOLUTION

Charles II died in the year 1685. After his death, James, son of Charles I, became king as James II. James like his father was a devout Catholic, making it difficult for him to rule over a nation that was Protestant. Troubles for him started when he appointed Catholics to high offices and dismissed Parliament for failing to obey his wishes. Furthermore, the crisis began when James II's wife gave birth to a son. To the people of England it meant another Catholic king would someday sit on the throne. The Parliament reacted quickly to this. Many of the prominent leaders invited Mary, the Protestant daughter of James II to rule England jointly with her husband, William of Orange who was the prince of Holland and also a devoted Protestant. When Mary and William arrived in England, James II fled to France for his life. The people of England called this revolution a "Glorious Revolution" as not even a drop of blood was shed and Mary and William jointly became rulers in the year 1689. The next year, William and Mary backed the Bill of Rights passed by Parliament through which England attained a limited constitutional monarchy. However, Mary died in 1694, after a short reign of five years and William soon followed her to the grave in 1702. After the death of William of Orange, Mary's sister, Anne, a protestant became queen under whom England grew stronger and more united and with the passing of the Act of Union, passed in 1707, the nation of Great Britain, consisting of England, Scotland and Wales was formed, with a central government in London. It was also during her reign that nation saw the emergence of the two political parties in parliament, the Tories and the Whigs. When Anne died in 1714, the throne passed to James I, who ruled over a small principality in Hanover, Germany. James ascended the English throne as George I, as the first monarch of the House of Hanover.

3.7 THE IMPACT OF RESTORATION ON BRITAIN

After Restoration and with the establishment of more democratic form of government, things started falling in place, leaving man with more time to indulge in scientific pursuits and leisure activities. Gradually the Industrial Revolution set in, which, in a sense, began with the British inventors finding a practical way to apply the ideas of the Scientific Revolution, this in turn, led to other developments as well and the works of Enlightenment thinkers and writers was born out of it.

3.7.1 THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT OR THE AGE OF REASON

As mentioned earlier, Restoration gave impetus to scientific enquiry. Various scientific studies were made which led to other developments as well. Advancements made in disciplines such as astronomy, physics, chemistry and mathematics seemed to give hope to humans that someday science would bring harmony to their inharmonious world. Thinkers in other fields too tried to make studies orderly and rational. For this reason, this age was also known as the Age of Reason or the Age of Enlightenment. Furthermore, in this age a cultural movement of intellectuals took place in Europe which emphasized on the power of reason in order to reform society and advance knowledge. Its chief exponents were the philosophers Baruch Spinoza, John Locke, Pierre Bayle, mathematician Sir Isaac Newton and historian Voltaire. The Enlightenment, which began around 1650 lasted till about 1800, after which it gave way to Romanticism, which emphasized on emotions and was thus a counter enlightenment monument. You will read about Romanticism in the next unit.

3.7.1.1 THE NEO CLASSICAL IDEAL

As mentioned earlier, the impact of The Enlightenment was seen in various fields including literature. The developments brought about by The Enlightenment inspired a literary movement which can be termed as Neo Classicism. The writers of this period like Alexander Pope reverted to the ancient writers of Greece and Rome like Homer and Virgil and emulated their **classical virtues of clarity, order, reason, balance and wit**. This period in the history of England was also known as England's Augustan Age as this period in England also enjoyed great power, prosperity and stability like the Augustan period of Roman history when Emperor Augustus ruled. The literature of the Restoration and the eighteenth century can be broadly divided into three major divisions which are also known as "ages" namely, the Age of Dryden, the Age of Pope and the Age of Johnson.

3.7.1.1.1 The Age of Dryden:

The Age of Dryden extends from the year of restoration of Charles II in 1660 to 1700, the year Dryden died. As mentioned earlier, this period is known as the Restoration in history. Let us now have a look at the key literary figures of this age.

(a)John Dryden (1631-1700): Dryden was a poet, critic and a dramatist. As a poet his forte was his verse satires: *Absalom and Achitophel*, *The Medal* and *Mac Flacknoe*. He also wrote two long didactic poems, *Religio Laici* and *The Hind and the Panther*. Dryden was also a critic of much acclaim. He has been called 'the Father of English Criticism.' His most notable critical works are the *Essay on Dramatic Poesy* and the *Preface to the Fables*. As a dramatist, Dryden adapted Shakespeare's *All for Love*, an entirely new version of *Antony and Cleopatra*. He also wrote heroic dramas like *The Indian Empress*, *The Conquest of Granada* and *Aurengzeb*.

(b)Samuel Pepys (1633-1703): Samuel Pepys was a diarist who kept his diary for nine years, beginning in the year 1660. This diary was a unique document in itself. He gave a frank account of the daily events in London which included horrific accounts of the deadly plague of 1665 and the Great Fire.

3.7.1.1.2 The Age of Pope and Swift:

Now let us take a glimpse at some of the notable writers of the Age of Pope and Swift and how England's first literary periodicals also appeared in the early 1700s.

(a)Alexander Pope (1688-1744): One of the most esteemed poets of the Augustan Age was Alexander Pope. His poetry is a brilliant example of neo classical style full of wit, elegance

and moderation. Pope started writing poems at a tender age. Some of his earlier works are *Pastorals* (1709), *Essays on Criticism* (1711) and *Windsor Palace. The Rape of the Lock* (1714) was his first masterpiece, a satire in the form of mock epic. His translations of Homer's *Illiad* established him as an ace poet. His major satirical book, *The Dunciad* first appeared in 1728. In 1733-4, he published his philosophical poem *An Essay on Man* and *Moral Essays*.

(b)Jonathan Swift (1667-1745): Swift was a close friend of Pope who was primarily a satirist. In his satires he brought out the fact that human nature is generally flawed and "improvement must begin with a recognition of our intellectual and moral limitations." During Queen Anne's reign, Swift enjoyed her favour and played an important part in the literary and political life of London. Some of his most famous works are *The Battle of the Books*, a contribution to the dispute between the relative merits of the ancients and the moderns in literature. *A Tale of the Tub*, a satire on the 'corruptions in religion and learning'. Swift was also a poet. However, his poems are less well known. Nonetheless, his *On the Death of Dr. Swift*, a partly satirical poem, in which he imagines public reaction to the news of his death, thereafter his account of his own estimate about himself, is one of his most admired poems.

(c)Daniel Defoe(1660?-1731): Defoe was primarily a novelist and journalist. He is chiefly remembered as the first of the English novelists. His masterpiece *Robinson Crusoe* has been called the first novel in English. Defoe's experiments with the novel were responsible for the beginning of a new form of reading that became popular with the middle class known as literary periodicals.

3.7.1.1.3 The Age of Johnson

Another great writer whose personality seems to dominate the Augustan Age was Dr. Johnson. The Age of Dr. Johnson saw some acclaimed writers like James Boswell, Oliver Goldsmith, Samuel Richardson, Henry fielding and Lawrence Stern.

(a)Samuel Johnson (1709-84): Samuel Johnson was a critic, poet, lexicographer and essayist. As mentioned earlier, he is the greatest representative of the later Augustan Age. As a critic, Johnson is best known for his Preface to the edition of Shakespeare (1765) and for his *Lives of Poets*. As a biographer, Johnson shows a deep compassion towards the men he portrays. Johnson was also a poet. However, his poetic output was small but his *The Vanity of Human Wishes* is described as one of the few great poems of the Augustan period. Johnson's *A Dictionary of English Language* (1755) is the first great work of its kind in English.

(b)James Boswell (1740-95): Boswell is the man behind Samuel Johnson's fame as he was the author of the much acclaimed book *Life of Samuel Johnson*. This book is considered to be the first modern biography written in English. Boswell devoted thirty years of his life to compiling detailed records of Johnson's activities and conversations. It was as a result of his dedication that this biography is ranked as one of the best ever written. In addition to his portrayal of Johnson, Boswell wrote numerous personal journals. His *An Account of Corsica* (1768) and *Journal of a Tour in the Hebrides* (1785) are some of his other well known works.

The Age of Johnson saw other literary accomplishments as well. On the stage, the Restoration tradition of satire was exploited to the fullest by Oliver Goldsmith and other comic playwrights. Some of the important works of prose were Edward Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-88). It was around this time that novel, too, saw a brilliant rise. Among the best written novels of this period were Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* and

Clarissa, Fanny Burney's *Evelina*, Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* and *Joseph Andrews* and Lawrence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*.

3.7.1.2 PERIODICALS AND PERIODICAL ESSAYS

3.7.1.2.1 What is a Periodical essay?

With the accession Queen Anne in 1702, dissemination of printed material opened the doors of reading to the masses. A lot of periodicals (published works that appear in a new edition on a regular schedule, for example, newspapers, journals, magazines) were published. These periodicals published novels, stories and other forms of writings which appeared at regular intervals.

3.7.1.2.2 What are Periodical Essays?

Periodical essays are those informal or familiar essays which are printed in a magazine or newspaper. The credit of introducing periodical essays goes to Richard Steele who launched his *The Tatler* on 12 April 1709. Nothing of this type had been attempted before him in England or elsewhere. Thus, *The Tatler* and thereafter *The Spectator*, which also appeared in the early 1700s, are England's first literary periodicals. The informal essays of Richard Steele and Joseph Addison were published in these periodicals. Both *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* are known for their "wide-ranging, nonpolitical content and graceful tone and style." These periodicals of Addison and Steele differed from the newspapers as the newspapers recorded events whereas their periodicals transformed journalism into literature. Furthermore, the periodical essays dealt with morals and manners. The periodicals usually covered not more than two sides (in two columns) of the newspaper. Both Addison and Steele set high standard for the later political periodical essayists and journalists.

3.7.1.3 Characteristics of Neo Classical Writers

As we have read earlier, the Neo Classical writers were highly inspired by the classicists and emulated their style in their writings. As they followed the classicists, they were traditional in their approach and gave importance to rules and discipline. Their approach towards literature was objective, and seldom displayed their personal feelings in their writings. For them, matter was of utmost concern, and they cared little for the spirit.

To conclude, the Augustan period set high standards for writers to emulate. The age was dominated by neo-classical ideas on literature and culture. However, by 1750, with the advent of the Industrial Revolution, the nation was making great strides. As a result of industrialization, a lot of evils started creeping in society. A lot of disparities were seen in society as it got divided into two parts. On the one hand were the rich industrialists and on the other, the poor factory workers and with the passage of time, the gulf between these two extreme groups kept on widening as the rich kept on rolling on riches and the poor grew more wretched than ever. A number of new industrial towns were set up, where inside the factories, men, women and children worked as labourers for twelve to fourteen hours a day. As a result of these changes, writers and intellectuals began to lose faith in the ability of human reason to solve problems. The great minds of the Age of Reason looked towards science for answers, however, science too failed to solve the problems of life and the "progress" seemed to be bringing misery to the teeming millions.

As they began to doubt the basic assumptions of the Enlightenment, writers turned away from the standards of neoclassicism and instead of writing in the high flown classical style, some writers started writing in the common language of everyday life. These writers moved away from the spirit of rationalism and gave importance to powerful emotions. These were the pre-romantic

poets who were the precursors to romanticism. We will read about them and the Romantic Movement in the next unit.

3.8 GLOSSARY

Interregnum: A period of discontinuity or gap in a government, organization or social order. The word comes from Latin “inter” meaning “between” and “regum” meaning “reign”. The English interregnum was the period of parliamentary and military rule by the Lord protector Oliver Cromwell under the commonwealth of England after the English civil war. It began with the overthrow and execution of Charles I in January 1649 and ended with the restoration of Charles II on May 29, 1660.

Couplet: A couplet is a pair of rhyming lines written in the same meter (rhythmical pattern).

Heroic Couplet: A heroic couplet is a pair of rhymed pair of iambic pentameter lines (verse written in five foot lines, each foot with a weak stress followed by one strong stress, as in the word “afraid”). During the neoclassical period heroic couplet was often a closed couplet, with its meaning and grammar complete in two lines. The following lines from Alexander Pope’s *An Essay on Criticism* are an example of closed heroic couplet.

True ease in writing comes from art, not chance

chance,

As those move easiest who have learned to dance.

Biography: A biography is a form of nonfiction in which a writer tells the life story of another person. A good biographer uses many sources of information, including the subject’s letters, and journals, interviews with the subject or with people who know the subject, books and other works about the subject. James Boswell’s *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, is one of the most famous biographies ever written.

Familiar Essay: A familiar essay or an informal essay, like a formal essay, presents the observations and opinions of its author, but it does so in a more conversational and casual way. As this kind of essay expresses the thoughts of the author it is also known as a **Personal essay**. When a familiar essay is printed in a magazine or a newspaper, it is called a **Periodical essay**.

3.9 LET US SUM UP

- In this unit you got a glimpse of the major events and movements of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries which included the two Civil Wars, Restoration and the Glorious Revolution.
- You saw how the Civil Wars and interregnum resulted in a turbulent age, whose repercussions were felt in the literature written during the age.
- You also saw how with Restoration, a scientific temperament developed in the country which finally culminated in the form of the Industrial Revolution and how with the growth of an enquiring mind, the Age of Enlightenment and Reason dawned, establishing neo classicism in literature.

3.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- Q1. Why was the victory of the English over the Spanish Armada of importance to England?
- Q2. Who were the Puritans? Name two Puritan writers.
- Q3. What were the chief characteristics of the Metaphysical School of Poetry?
- Q4. Who were the “Sons of Ben”?
- Q5. What do you know about the Neo Classical ideal?
- Q6. Discuss two major writers of the Age of Dryden.
- Q7. Who was James Boswell? What is he famous for?
-

3.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- A1. Refer to the write-up given at 3.3.1.
- A2. Refer to the write-up given at 3.3.1.
- A3. Refer to the write-up given at 3.4.1.2.1.
- A4. Refer to the write-up given at 3.4.1.1.
- A5. Refer to the write-up given at 3.7.1.1.
- A6. Refer to the write-up given at 3.7.1.1.1.
- A7. Refer to the write-up given at 3.7.1.1.3.
-

3.12 REFERENCES

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 5. Andrew Grey Bommarito, Ralph O’Brien(ed.) *The English Tradition*, (Prentice Hall, 1991)
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3.13 SUGGESTED READING

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5. Andrew Grey Bommarito, Ralph O'Brien(ed.) *The English Tradition*,(Prentice Hall, 1991)

3.14 TERMINAL AND MODEL QUESTIONS

Q1. Define the following:

- Familiar essay
- Biography
- Heroic couplet

Q2. What were the factors responsible for the birth of the Age of Enlightenment?

Q3. Write short notes on the following:

- The Restoration
- The Glorious Revolution
- Periodical essays
- Civil Wars

UNIT 4 THE ROMANTIC AND THE VICTORIAN PERIODS

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Objectives

4.3 A Bird's Eye View of the Romantic Age

4.3.1 Origin of the Romantic Revival

4.3.2 The Great Inspirations

4.4 Chief Characteristics of Romanticism

4.5 Romantic Literature

4.5.1 Poetry

4.5.2 Prose

4.6 Glossary

4.7 Check your Progress

4.8 Answers to check your Progress

4.9 The Victorian Age

4.10 Religion and Science

4.11 The Victorian Society

4.12 The Victorian Compromise

4.13 Victorian Literature

4.13.1. Poetry

4.13.2. Fiction

4.13.3. Non Fictional Prose

4.13.4. Drama

4.14 Some Major Movements

4.14.1. Realism

4.14.2. Naturalism

4.14.3. Symbolism

4.14.4. Existentialism

4.14.5. The Oxford Movement

4.14.6. The Pre- Raphaelite Brotherhood

4.15 Glossary

4.16 Check your Progress

4.17 Answers to Check your Progress

4.18 Let us sum up

4.19 References

4.20 Suggested Reading

4.21 Terminal and Model Questions

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit you saw how at the turn of the sixteenth century, England witnessed a national crisis in the form of a Civil War. However, with Restoration, things gradually started falling in place. With the establishment of a more democratic form of government and the developments made in the field of science, ushered in a dawn of Enlightenment and reason. However, with the passage of time, Neo classicism became very rigid as a result of which many writers revolted against its scientific rationalization of nature. With this, the seeds of Romanticism were sown. In this unit we will focus on Romanticism which was born as a reaction against the Industrial Revolution and the aristocratic social and political norms of the Age of Enlightenment. The unit will further introduce you to the Victorian Age, focusing on how on the one hand, Britain transformed by the Industrial Revolution, was becoming the world's leading imperial power, and how on the other, the same Industrial Revolution was wreaking havoc on the lives of the poor. The unit will also focus on how with the advancement of science, religious values were being questioned like never before, and how all this resulted in a society that was divided and in a state of flux. In this unit you will also study about the authors of this age who through their works hold a mirror to their age.

4.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you should be able to understand the following:

- The Romantic Revival-its origin, great inspirations behind the movement, its chief characteristics and the major Romantic writers
 - The Victorian Age, the tussle between religion and science which was particular to the age and its effect on the Victorian society, which was a subject that was portrayed in the works of many writers of the age
 - The Victorian Compromise
 - Some important writers of the Victorian Age and their works
 - Some important movements that began in the Romantic and the Victorian Age like Realism, Naturalism, Symbolism and Pre Raphaelite Movement
-

4.3 A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE AGE

You read in the previous unit that Classicism slowly petered out, paving way for new writers who chose to express their views in the common language of man. This was the beginning of Romanticism. The Age of Reason, with its emphasis on matter, form, objectivity, discipline, reason, and tradition was fast decaying, giving way to a new spirit which emphasised on heart, freedom, subjectivity and the like. The men of literature of this age tried to revert to the old way of the Elizabethans and even the medieval poets. Furthermore, they were deeply inspired by the philosophies of men like Rousseau, Locke and Hume who served as major influences in the French Revolution. It is widely believed that the Romantic Revival began with the storming of the Bastille in Paris, which initiated the French Revolution. The Romantics were deeply inspired by the French Revolution which gave the slogan of liberty, equality and fraternity. However, these ideals were ruthlessly crushed as General Napoleon Bonaparte, a key figure of the French Revolution which was fought primarily to abolish French monarchy, took increasing charge of France and became emperor Napoleon I. As Napoleon Bonaparte came to power in Paris he started his mission for French military expansion and invaded Britain but the British fleet, under Lord Nelson defeated the French fleet at the Battle of Trafalgar, in 1805. Furthermore, Robespierre's Reign of Terror disillusioned the revolution enthusiasts. Disgruntled by the affairs

in France -a country which first had inspired the classicists and then the Romantics- and the political affairs of their own country, the English Romantic poets looked towards Germany for inspiration and the great German minds finally helped to sustain English Romanticism for a long time.

4.3.1 ORIGIN OF THE ROMANTIC REVIVAL

The term Romantic Revival was first used in Germany and France at the end of 18th and the beginning of 19th centuries to classify a new movement in the arts including literature, especially in poetry. The German poet Goethe, critic A.W. Schlegel and the French writer Madame de Stael were instrumental in popularizing this movement in the European continent.

Romanticism, in England, although influenced by the French Revolution, began in 1798, the year which saw the publication of *Lyrical Ballads*, a collection of poems by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, not 1789, the year which saw the storming of the Bastille. However, some writers like **Oliver Goldsmith, James Thompson, William Collins, Thomas Gray, Robert Burns and William Blake** broke free from the shackles of Classicism and advocated liberalism in literature, who in the words of Hudson had “a love of the wild, fantastic...” These writers displayed the characteristics of the Romantics before the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads*, which marked the beginning of the English Romantic Movement in literature and are known as the **precursors of Romanticism**. In the second and the third editions of *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth stated the principles which he believed should be the rules for writing poetry. He was of the opinion that poetry should be written in “**the language of ordinary men and women, found at its unspoilt in the speech of rural people.**” Thus, he was against ‘poetic diction’, which was hitherto considered to be a prerequisite to writing poetry. The English Romantic Revival is mainly concerned with the work of a number of writers between 1790 and 1830, especially the six poets William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats.

4.3.2 THE GREAT INSPIRATIONS

- **Jean –Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778):** Rousseau was a leading philosopher of the eighteenth century France. Although he died before the beginning of the Romantic Age, yet he served as a great inspiration for the French and the American revolutions. Rousseau was of the opinion that man, in the midst of nature, was a pure being and that it was society which leashed and corrupted him. Understanding the importance of nature, he gave the slogan ‘Back to Nature.’ Thus, Rousseau blazed the trail for the Romantic Movement.
- **Johanne Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832):** Goethe was one of the most influential writers of the eighteenth century. Goethe sought inspiration in early German literature of the Middle ages. In these works Goethe found a source of pride for a new generation of German writers but also a primitive simplicity much in keeping with Rousseau’s ideas and values.

4.4 THE CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS OF ROMANTICISM

- **Escapism:** The Romantic writers were escapists who abandoned many of the prevalent ideas and principles of the previous age. Moreover, the Romantics, were deeply inspired by the French Revolution, as it stood for high ideals like liberty, equality and fraternity. However, the high hopes of the Romantics came crumbling down as the French Revolution could not sustain the high ideals it initially stood for. As a result, these poets turned to literature and art as a way to find answers to their questions. Keats for example

found solace in Hellenic art, Wordsworth in nature and Coleridge in the supernatural world.

- **Love for Nature:** As the Romantics were escapists, they transcended the mundane and sought refuge in something that was lasting and enduring. The most important Nature poet of the era was William Wordsworth who found a safe haven in the lap of Nature. For him Nature was a comforting mother and a great teacher. These lines from his well known poem “The Tables Turned” express his profound reverence for nature.

One impulse of the vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

- **Importance to inner feelings:** The Romantics were opposed to the Classists. Where, on the one hand, the Classists gave importance to outer form and intellect, the Romantics believed in examining inner feelings and “spontaneous overflow of emotions”.
- **Rich imagination:** The Romantics were free spirited men who let their imagination soar to great heights. Coleridge’s poem ‘Kubla Khan’ is a brilliant example of rich imagination.
- **Love for the literature of the middle Ages:** The Romantic writers had special love for the literature of the middle ages. They glorified chivalry and the flamboyant medieval knights in their works, the inspiration for which they derived from Goethe. Furthermore, they also appreciated the folk traditions.
- **Idealists:** The Romantic writers were idealists by nature. They were not satisfied with the real world around them and were in search of an idyllic world, which they often found in Nature, the glorious past or in the mystical.
- **Experimentation with new forms of expression:** The Romantics defied the trends set by the Classists. They stood for individualism and did not adhere to rules set by the Classists. They gave importance to solitary life rather than life in society. In stanza form too the Romantics abandoned the conventional poetic diction in favour of fresher language and bolder figures. For all these reasons, Victor Hugo defined Romanticism as “liberalism in literature”.

4.5 ROMANTIC LITERATURE

The English Romantic period is generally associated with the two generations of Romantic poets which you will be reading shortly. The publication of Wordsworth’s *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798 is often held to mark the start of the movement. Nonetheless, there were other forms of literature that flourished during this period as well. Now let us read about the various development made in the various literary forms in detail.

4.5.1 POETRY

As mentioned earlier, the Romantic Age was most well-known for its achievement in literature especially poetry. As mentioned earlier, the English Romantic revival is supposed to be the work of a number of writers between 1790 and 1830, especially the six poets William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats. The first three come under the first generation of Romantic poets whereas the later three were known as the second generation of Romantic poets. Wordsworth and Coleridge along with Robert Southey, another poet of the Romantic school, were also known as the lake poets as they

lived in the lake district of England. Let us now take a glance at these poets and know a little about their works:

William Blake (1757-1827): Blake was an engraver, poet and mystic. He engraved his poems instead of printing them. *Songs of Innocence* (1789) and *Songs of Experience* (1794) are his well known illustrated collection of poems. As mentioned earlier, Blake was not just a poet but a mystic too. His *Tiriel* (1788-9) is an early example of prophetic book. In Blake's works contrasts exist together. For instance, innocence and experience, energy and control, cruelty and meekness coexist. Some of his other well known prophetic books include *The Book of Urizen*, *Visions of the Daughters of Ahania*, and *The French Revolution*.

William Wordsworth (1770-1850): Wordsworth was one of the greatest poets England has ever produced. Nature had a profound influence on him. So much so was he inspired by nature that he became a pantheist, believing that the growth of the human spirit could only be possible through close contact with nature. Wordsworth's chief works include *Poems in two volumes*, *The Prelude*, his verse tale of peasant life, *The Ruined Cottage*, the first two books of *The Prelude*, *Intimations of Immortality* and *Lyrical Ballads*. He was a poet of such great stature that he was made the poet laureate in the year 1843.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834): Coleridge was an outstanding poet and critic. However, he suffered from bad health for much of his life and around 1800 became an opium addict. Thereafter, he mainly wrote under the influence of it, as a result his body of work is very scattered and disorganized. Two of his best known poems *Christabel* and *Kubla Khan* are incomplete. Among his other well known poems are *The Ancient Mariner* and *Dejection*. He collaborated with William Wordsworth on *Lyrical Ballads*, the book which is said to have marked the English Romantic Movement. *Biographia Literaria* is considered to be Coleridge's most important critical work. Indeed, it is a misfortune for the lovers of literature that Coleridge's ill health and opium addiction curtailed his literary career as a result of which his literary output is relatively small.

Lord Byron (1788-1824): Lord Byron was primarily a poet, although he has also written some plays. He inherited from his father his good looks which made him irresistible to women, thereby landing him in scandalous love affairs. He published his first book of poems, *Hours of Idleness* in 1807. His autobiographical *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* talks of the exploits of his moody, reckless, sensitive and adventurous hero Childe Harold. His most ambitious work, *Don Juan* is an unfinished mock epic in 16 cantos.

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822): Shelly was a friend of Lord Byron. Shelley attended the prestigious Eton and Oxford colleges but was never able to settle there as a regular student. At Oxford, he became friends with a young man named Thomas Jefferson Hogg, whose political views were as strong as his own. With Hogg's support he wrote a radical pamphlet titled *The Necessity of Atheism* as a result of which both were expelled from Oxford. The year 1813 saw the publication of his first important poem "Queen Mab". Shelley spent the last years of his life in Italy where he became close friends with Byron. Here Shelley wrote some of his best poetry including "Ode to the West Wind", "To a Skylark" and *Prometheus Unbound*.

John Keats (1795-1821): Last but not the least of the Romantic poets, John Keats was the most lyrical of all the Romantics. The young Keats was apprenticed to a doctor, however, he abandoned his medical career in order to pursue his passion for poetry. His first major effort, *Endymion* was published in the spring of 1818. Thereafter, came his

second long poem *Hyperion*, which was never completed. Keats is chiefly remembered for his odes. Some of the most famous odes he has written are “Ode on a Grecian Urn”, “Ode to Nightingale” and “Ode to Autumn.” Like the other second generation of Romantic poets, Byron and Shelley, Keats too died young. He succumbed to consumption at the tender age of twenty five in Italy, where he travelled from England thinking that the mild climate of Italy would cure him. By his own request his epitaph reads: “Here lies one whose name is writ in water.”

4.5.2 PROSE

Poetry was the dominant literary form during the Romantic Age. However, there were some developments in other literary forms too. Significant prose work also appeared mainly in the form of essays and novels. However, it was a relatively barren period for drama. Although, Shelley and some other poets wrote plays, they were meant to be read rather than to be produced on the stage.

Among the most popular Romantic Essayists were Charles Lamb(1775-1834), William Hazlitt(1778-1830) and Thomas De Quincy (1785-1859). Most of the essays of these essayists were published in *The London Magazine*, a periodical which was sympathetic to the Romantics.

The Romantic Novelists, unlike the Romantic Poets did not break from the past. In fact, the three main types of Romantic novels- the Gothic novel, the novel of manners and the historical romances- all took inspiration from the past. The Gothic novel was full of Romantic fascination with mystery and the supernatural. *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus* (1818) by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley is one of the most famous Gothic novels. The Romantic novel of manners was carried on in the tradition of earlier writers by satirizing the prevalent British customs. Among the most well known of Romantic novelists of manners is Jane Austen, whose most famous works include *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) and *Pride and Prejudice* (1813). Historical Romances were imaginative works of fiction built around a historical event or a real person. These historical romances had existed before the Romantic Age but attained popularity with Sir Walter Scott. Sir Walter Scott, portrayed knights, chivalry and Scottish nationalism through his novels.

The year 1832 is usually considered the end of Britain’s Romantic Age. This was the year of the passing of the First Reform Bill. However, many of the writers of the coming generations were deeply inspired by the Romantics. Thus, although the Romantic Age, like any other age came to a close but left an indelible impression in the minds of posterity which can be traced till date.

4.6 GLOSSARY

Bastille: Bastille was a fortress in Paris which played an important role in the internal conflicts of France and was used as a state prison by the kings of France. It was stormed on 14 July 1789 during the French Revolution, thereafter it became an important symbol of the French Republican Movement.

Poetic diction: It is a term used to refer to the linguistic style, the vocabulary and the metaphors used in writing poetry. All these elements were thought of as properly different in poetry and prose till the time William Wordsworth challenged the distinction in his *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). Wordsworth proposed that a “language near to the language of men” was as appropriate for poetry as for prose. This idea bore weight for some time but was later condemned by the Modernist poets who went against it by saying that there was no such thing as prosaic.

Pantheism: the belief that God and the material world are one and the same thing and that God is present in everything

Pindaric Ode : a form of ode with three stanza sections, the first and the second stanza having one metrical form and the third having a different form (for details please refer to the unit on General Terms on Poetry)

Mock Epic: A mock epic is a poem about a trivial matter written in the style of a serious epic. The mingling of the grand style with trivial subject matter produces comic effects. Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* is a brilliant example of the mock epic style.

Cantos: A canto is a section of a long poem. Both Alexander Pope's *Rape of the Lock* and Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queen* were written in cantos.

Scott: somebody who comes from Scotland or has Scottish ancestry.

4.7 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. According to Wordsworth what should be the language of poetry?

Q2. Name two great persons who were the inspiration behind the Romantic Revival?

Q3. Match the following:

William Blake	<i>Prometheus Unbound</i>
William Wordsworth	<i>Songs of Experience</i>
S.T. Coleridge	<i>Hyperion</i>
P.B. Shelley	<i>The Prelude</i>
John Keats	<i>Biographia Literaria</i>]

Q4. Who is your favourite Romantic poet? Why?

Q5. Write short notes on the following:

- (i) Development of novel in the Romantic Age
- (ii) Realism
- (iii) Naturalism

4.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

A1. Refer to the write-up at 4.3.1

A2. Jean Jacques Rousseau and Johanne Wolfgang von Goethe

A3. William Blake	<i>Songs of Experience</i>
William Wordsworth	<i>The Prelude</i>
S.T. Coleridge	<i>Biographia Literaria</i>
P.B. Shelley	<i>Prometheus Unbound</i>
John Keats	<i>Hyperion</i>

A4. Refer to the write-up on 4.5.1.

A5. (i) Refer to the write-up on 4.5.2.2.

(ii) Refer to the write-up on 4.6.1.

(iv) Refer to the write-up on 4.6.2.

4.9 THE VICTORIAN AGE

The period coinciding with the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901) is known as the Victorian period. Queen Victoria ruled for sixty four years-the longest reign of any British monarch. The first fourteen years of Queen Victoria's rule were full of struggle and growth. The British economy witnessed a boom due to rapid industrial development. With the advent of the Industrial Revolution, Britain became a world leader in manufacturing. Factories were established and the factory owners made great profit. Banks, retail shops and other businesses also started prospering and all this resulted in the growth of three important social classes-the rich factory workers, who formed the capitalists or the "haves", the industrial working class or the "have-nots" and the modern middle class or the bourgeois who were able to lead a better life because of the facilities provided by the industrial growth. Furthermore, industrialization gave a boost to Britain's industry and commerce and Britain started trading with various countries around the globe. However, Britain was not just confined to maintaining trading relations with other countries but also began to exhibit imperialistic tendencies. As Britain's commerce and industry prospered, it began expanding its merchant fleet and its powerful navy. Economic and military power helped Britain to acquire new colonies around the globe as a result of which it became a superpower.

However, industrialization had dire consequences too. As a result of industrialization, the British society got divided into two halves. On the one hand were rich industrial owners and on the other were poor factory workers and with the passage of time the gulf between these two kept on widening as the rich industry owners who were rolling in riches, while were poor factory workers existed in abject poverty barely able to make their ends meet.

4.10 RELIGION AND SCIENCE

The Victorian Age was not just the age that made tremendous advancements in the commercial field but also made great advancements in the field of science and medicine. Herbert Spencer and Charles Darwin were two great men of science who gave theories that challenged the Biblical concept of God. Charles Darwin talked of the Theory of Evolution in which he stated that man had evolved from apes and had not been created by God as stated in the Bible. This statement of Darwin created bitter controversy and most of the Victorian thinkers saw Darwin's theory as a direct challenge to Biblical truth and traditional religious faith. Darwin believed that a process called natural selection guides evolution. By this process, some organisms survive because they can adapt to changing conditions whereas some die out because they cannot. Herbert Spencer, a social scientist applied Darwin's idea to social science and came up with the idea of "the survival of the fittest."

4.11 VICTORIAN SOCIETY

As a result of the various advancements made in the field of science and commerce, the Victorian society was caught in a state of flux. Change was evident everywhere. The theories propounded by Darwin and Spencer shook religious beliefs of the people. They did not know whether to side with the traditional beliefs or to forge ahead with science. Furthermore, progress and prosperity brought by the Industrial Revolution also brought with it poverty, ugliness and injustice. With all this turbulence, the Victorian society was given to doubting and questioning. As the Victorians times were testing times, with people groping in the dark, looking for answers to the questions peculiar to theirs, it also saw the emergence of many reformers, theorists and

crusaders who thought a great deal about the critical issues of their times and sought to provide answers to the questions raised by the Victorians.

4.12 THE VICTORIAN COMPROMISE

The Victorian era was a complex and contradictory era, as on the one hand it was an era of progress, stability, morals and great social reforms and on the other, it was characterized by poverty, injustice and social unrest and . Darwin's Theory of Evolution hit at the Book of Genesis as it stated that man had evolved from lower forms of life and that he had no soul. With this new theory propounded by Darwin, man began to doubt the concept of God and religion. Hence, the Victorian Age was an age of doubt and conflicts. The Victorians, on the one hand were very strict about their morality but on the other hand, promiscuity plagued their society. This particular situation which witnessed contrasts and with which the Victorians tried to strike a balance by taking the middle way, is often referred to as Victorian Compromise.

4.13 VICTORIAN LITERATURE

The political, moral, scientific and religious ideas of the Victorian Age helped in shaping the works of the Victorian men of letters. The Victorian times were progressive times as the age was making advancements in the various fields. Education was spreading as a result of which the literacy rate increased. With the rise of an eager reading public, books began to enjoy immense popularity and influenced the people at large. The Victorian writers, through their works, depicted the times in which they were living. The ideas of the Victorian Age- political and moral, scientific and religious helped to shape the works of the Victorian writers. Some of them like Charles Dickens exposed the dark side of the industrial revolution by giving an account of poverty, slums, brutal factory conditions and diseases that plagued the Victorian society, while some like Matthew Arnold tried to find answers to the questions that perplexed the mind of a Victorian. Let us now take a brief look at the Victorian literary scene and also trace some of the developments that were made in the various forms of writing.

4.13.1 POETRY

The Victorian Age produced a large and diverse body of poetry. In early Victorian poetry one can see the influence of the Romantic poets. However, it was later replaced by naturalism and realism. Now let us briefly read about some important Victorian poets.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-92): Tennyson was the most representative poet of his age. He was influenced by the earlier romantic poets, especially Walter Scott. Tennyson wrote many long narrative poems on ancient and medieval themes like the King Arthur legend. Most of his poems have a lyrical quality but some also reveal a deeper, more thoughtful side especially poems like "Ulysses" and "In Memoriam". Tennyson became poet laureate after Wordsworth's death in 1850.

Robert Browning (1812-89): Robert Browning was another accomplished poet of the Victorian Era. However, he did not achieve much acclaim during his lifetime. He too, like Tennyson, wrote varied poems. Many of Browning's poems display Romantic traits. Others show traces of realism. Although Browning has written poems of different flavor, he is most remembered for his **Dramatic Monologues**- long speeches by an imaginary character- to expose deception and reveal a character's inner self. In personal life, he eloped with Elizabeth Barrett, whose father did not approve of the match.

Matthew Arnold (1822-88): Arnold was the first Victorian poet who focused on the turbulence of the age through his works. He was a poet, essayist and critic all rolled into one. Many of Arnold's

poems deal with alienation and isolation. In his poem 'Dover Beach', Arnold breaks free from poetic tradition and employs free verse (poetry with no fixed rhythm) to portray the confusion and the loss of faith of his times. Arnold was a forerunner of the more pessimistic naturalist writers.

Thomas Hardy (1840-1936): While it was Mathew Arnold who was a forerunner of naturalism in English poetry, it was in the works of Thomas Hardy that naturalism found its strongest voice. In both prose and poetry, Hardy focused on the role played by nature in shaping the destiny of human beings. He established his worth as a poet with his *Wessex Poems* (1890) and the *Dynasts* (1903-08).

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936): Rudyard Kipling wrote fiction, children's stories and poetry. Kipling is well known for his action packed narrative poems such as "Gunga Din". Many of his short poems are ballads and lyrics that have taken shape of popular songs over the years. His famous poems 'The Mary Gloster' and 'The Bolivar' fall under this category. In some of his realist poems like "Tommy" he employed the dialect of the working-class soldier.

G.M. Hopkins (1844-89): Hopkins was a Catholic priest who wrote religious verse. One can witness the influence of the earlier Romantic poets and the philosopher Duns Scots in his works. Hopkins was an innovative craftsman and introduced a rhythmic pattern called Sprung Rhythm that abandoned traditional metric feet. Although Hopkins remained unpublished in his own century, he became a great source of inspiration for the poets of the twentieth century.

4.13.2 FICTION

Novel is that literary form that can be seen as quintessentially Victorian. The novel owes its popularity to a steady increase in readership of the middle class. The members of this emerging middle class were avid readers who loved to read novels. Responding to their demand, the weekly and the monthly magazines published novels chapter by chapter in series form. Romanticism heavily influenced the early Victorian novelists, especially the three **Bronte sisters- Anne, Charlotte and Emily**. Emily is well known for her classic *Wuthering Heights* whereas Charlotte for her *Jane Eyre*.

The most famous Victorian novelist was **Charles Dickens** (1812-70). Dickens never forgot his impoverished childhood which finds an echo in many of his novels. The secret of Dickens's popularity lies in his vitality. Furthermore, he was a master of the grotesque. His craft lay in his exaggeration of human qualities to the point of caricature. In his novels, Dickens is concerned with the problem of crime and poverty. Some of his famous novels are *Great Expectations*, *Oliver Twist*, *A Tale of Two Cities* and *David Copperfield*.

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-63): Standing in stark contrast to Dickens who wrote of low life and was a warm blooded Romantic, we have Thackeray who wrote of the upper class and was an anti-romantic. His novels like *Vanity Fair* skillfully portray the life of the upper class people. Besides this, he also wrote historical novels such as *Esmond* and *the Virginians*.

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928): Hardy, an architect by profession, was also a gifted poet and a novelist 'par excellence'. Hardy's novels mainly revolve around Wessex, a region in the south and southern west of England. In his novels fate and nature play a key role in shaping human destiny. Some of his well known novels are *Far From the Madding Crowd*, *Return of the Native*, *Mayor of Casterbridge* and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*.

Among other notable Victorian novelists we have Anthony Trollope, William Harrison Ainsworth, Oscar Wilde, Charles Kingsley, Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot.

4.13.3 PROSE

As seen earlier, the Victorian age was an age of turmoil and conflicts. As a result it became an age of crusaders, reformers, theorists and thinkers. Some of the great thinkers were Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, John Stuart Mill, John Henry Newman and Matthew Arnold. All these great men were sages of their times. All these wise men understood the effects of industrial capitalism on social and personal life of people and tried to find a solution to the problems of their age through their writings. In *Sartor Resartus*, Carlyle presents an imaginary German philosopher who sees experience as a suit of clothes, through which he must try to find the nakedness of reality. Victorian non-fictional prose also includes histories, biographies, essays and criticism. The greatest of the Victorian historians were T.B. Macaulay and Thomas Carlyle. Besides histories, Carlyle also wrote historical biographies. All the Victorian prose writers produced influential prose works. Matthew Arnold made a sharp attack on the British class system in his essay *Culture and Anarchy*. Some of the other significant prose works of the Victorian period include *Modern Painters* by John Ruskin, *On Liberty* by John Stuart Mill, *The Idea of a University Defined* by John Henry Newman and *Studies in the History of Renaissance* by Walter Pater.

4.13.4 DRAMA

Poetry and Novel were the two principal forms of literature of the Victorian Age. In comparison with these forms, Drama looked pale and uninspired. Playhouses were few and were a subject to government restrictions. It was only towards the end of the century that drama began to show some signs of recovery with dramas like Sir Arthur Wing Pinero's *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* and the satirical ones like *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

In a nutshell, the Victorian Age produced a diverse body of literature ranging from entertainment to scholarly and from humorous to serious works. In many ways, the Victorian Age can be called a forerunner of the Modern Age. The problems that began with the advent of industrialization continue to confront us even today, the questions that tormented the Victorians still remain unresolved. As a result Victorian writers hold a special significance in the twentieth century.

4.14 MAJOR MOVEMENTS

Now let us take a look at some of the major movements that started emerging around the 18th and the 19th centuries:

14.4.1. REALISM

Realism in art and literature is a term which covers all those things that attempt to depict life as is usually experienced. It depicts actual life rather than miraculous events, larger than life characters or supernatural things. In a strict historical sense, the term refers to a movement in 19th century France led by novelists such as Honore de Balzac who viewed himself as "his society's recording secretary, observing and describing with cool detachment the "Human Comedy" (*La Comedie Humaine*), the collective title of his vast outpourings of novels and short stories. Another term for Realism, derived from Aristotle's *Poetics*, is 'mimesis', the Greek word for 'imitation.' Realism in literature became popular in the last part of the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth century. The realistic element was more evident in the novel than any other form of writing. The realistic novels dealt with grim social realities and often presented realistic portrayals of the psychological state of the character. Nineteenth century Realism was a reaction against Romanticism and was later evolved in the form of naturalism which is discussed below. Daniel Defoe is considered to be one of the pioneers of Realism as his novels had factual description and

narration. Some other realist novelists were the novelists George Eliot, Gustave Flaubert and Leo Tolstoy. Realism has had considerable influence on the dramatists and novelists of the nineteenth and twentieth century including novelists like Henry James, D.H. Lawrence and dramatists like the Norwegian playwright Ibsen. Realism in drama gained firm roots where Aleksey Pisemsky, Leo Tolstoy, Anton Chekov, Maxim Gorky and Stanislavski became its chief promoters.

14.4.2. NATURALISM

Naturalism was a movement that arose among writers, philosophers and artists in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century. As mentioned earlier, Naturalism was born out of Realism. Whereas Realism dealt with the things as they were, naturalism attempted to determine scientifically the forces that influenced the action of things. The naturalists were influenced by the theories of Socialist Darwinists like Herbert Spencer who was of the view that people were hopeless victims of natural laws that could not be changed. In literature, Naturalism was a school especially associated with the novelist Emily Zola. Zola was of the opinion that the artists and men of letters, while creating a piece of art should have the objectivity of a scientist. He also asserted that the motives and behavior of characters are determined by heredity and environment and that the work of an artist is to present his characters in relation to the influences of heredity and environment. He expressed the ideas of Naturalism the best in his works such as *The Experimental Novel* (1880) and *Naturalism in the Theatre* (1882). Zola influenced a number of writers including George Moore, the realists Gissing, Wells and Bennett. James Joyce's *Ulysses* took Zola's art to further heights. The works of American writers like Stephen Crane, Frank Norris, Theodore Dreiser, and James T. Farrell also show the influence of Zola. In drama, Naturalist classics include Zola's *Therese Raquin*, Maxim Gorky's *The Lower Depths* and Eugene O'Neill's early plays, such as *The Long Voyage Home*. Henrik Ibsen, the Norwegian dramatist was also another influential Naturalist writer.

14.4.3. SYMBOLISM

Symbolism was a literary movement of nineteenth century France. The chief aim of the symbolists was to give poetry a form of music that would evoke in its reader a mood rather than a moral or intellectual response. The symbolists view is that a poem should be an aesthetic object formed from the union of imagination and nature. The symbolists gave importance to 'states of mind and feelings' which are elusive and mysterious. Therefore, they emphasized on making use of symbols to suggest things. However, the use of suggestions makes their poetry obscure. The Symbolists stressed on the importance of suggestion and evocation of emotional states, especially by means of symbols corresponding to their states. They also made use of sound to achieve emotional effects. Symbolism is primarily associated with a school of French poets writing in the second half of the 19th century. The movement began with the work of Baudelaire (1821-67) and is mainly associated with Paul Verlaine (1844-96), Arthur Rimbaud (1854-91) and Stephen Mallarme (1842-98). The French Symbolists are particularly important in English literature for they have influenced some major English writers including the late Romantic A.C. Swinburne, novelist D.H. Lawrence, early twentieth century poets W.B. Yeats and T.S. Eliot and the novelist Marcel Proust. The American writer American writer Edgar Allan Poe (1809-49) and the German music-dramatist Richard Wagner (1813-83) also contributed to the shaping of Symbolism. It can also be said to have developed from Symbolism is said to have developed from Romanticism as symbolism, like Romanticism was also about feelings and emotions.

14.4.4. EXISTENTIALISM

Existentialism was a philosophical and literary movement which originated in the nineteenth century. Its basic concern is the freedom of the individual. Existentialism focuses on

the fact that we create ourselves through our choices, that one's individual essence is nothing more than the sum total of one's existence. The early nineteenth century philosopher Soren Kierkegaard is known as the father of existentialism. He was of the view that individual is solely responsible for giving his or her life meaning, in spite of the various obstacles and distractions like despair, anxiety, boredom, alienation and the like that confront an individual from time to time. The later existentialists although laid emphasis on the individual, but differed in their opinion as what constitutes a fuller life and how one achieves it, what obstacles must be overcome and what external and internal factors are involved, including the potential consequences of existence and non-existence of God. Existentialism became fashionable in the post World War II years as a way to reassert the importance of human individuality and freedom.

Some of the other important existentialists were Heidegger, Nietzsche and Jaspers in Germany and Sartre, Camus and Marcel in France. Existentialism has had little influence on British thought. However, many American works have been influenced by existentialism. The most notable among them being Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952), Saul Bellow's *Herzog* (1964) and Norman Mailer's *American Dream* (1965).

14.4.5. THE OXFORD MOVEMENT (TRACTARIAN MOVEMENT)

The Oxford Movement was a religious reform movement in the Anglican Church (the Church of England). It originated and had its main centre in Oxford and started with a sermon by John Keble, a poet and a fellow of the Oriel College, Oxford University, which he delivered in the University Church in 1833. The Oxford Movement preached that the Church had its independent, spiritual status, which was a direct descent from the medieval Catholic Church and represented a 'middle way' between post-Reformation Catholicism (counter reformation) and Protestantism. The movement propaganda was conducted through tracts (essays or treatises, usually short but published singly; usually on a religious subject) many of them by John Newman, the Movement's most powerful leader.

14.4.6. PRE RAPHAELITE BROTHERHOOD

The Pre Raphaelites were a group of English artists who, in 1848 founded a movement protesting the conventional academic art of the time. The Pre Raphaelites called for a simpler, less sophisticated form of painting than that which followed by Renaissance painter Raphael. In literature, the movement is associated with the poetry of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, his sister Christina Rossetti, A.C. Swinburne and William Morris, because in their poetry they strove to capture the sensuous religious character of pre-Raphaelite painting. The chief characteristics of Pre-Raphaelite poetry are as follows:

- They were inspired by the medieval ages and tried to capture their traits through their works.
- Art for Art's Sake: the pre-Raphaelites depicted or created beauty for its own sake, without much regard for material reward or the approval of moralists
- Vivid Visual Presentation: As the Pre-Raphaelite poets were also artists, it is quite natural that their poetry was strongly pictorial, rendering in minute detail what was seen.
- Sound and Sense: Pre-Raphaelite poetry was particularly rich in melody. The following lines from A.C. Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon* are a perfect example of the sonorous effect that the Pre-Raphaelite poetry had.

When the hounds of Spring are on Winter's traces,
The mother of months in meadows and plains
Fills the shadows and windy places

With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain...

These were some of the movements of the Victorian age. In the next unit we will discuss some of the major movements of the late nineteenth and the twentieth century.

4.15 GLOSSARY

Fellow: a member of learned or scientific society

Sensuous: relating to stimulation of the senses

Counter Reformation: Counter Reformation was a movement in the Catholic Church to counter the Protestant Reformation. It arose from the Council of Trent (1545-63) composed of the ecclesiastical leaders of the Catholic Church ; they dealt with questions of doctrine and discipline raised by the Protestant revolt. The only important English writer to be influenced by the Counter Reformation was the poet Richard Crashaw.

4.16 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:

Q1. Name the Victorian poet who became the poet laureate after Wordsworth's death.

Q2. Which Victorian poet is known for his Dramatic Monologues?

Q3. What do you know about Victorian non-fictional prose?

Q4. Write short notes on the following:

- (i) Existentialism
- (ii) Oxford Movement

4.17 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

A1. Alfred, Lord Tennyson

A2. Robert Browning

A3. Please refer to the write-up at 4.14.3

A4. (i) Please refer to the write-up on 4.15.1

(ii) Please refer to the write-up on 4.15.2

4.18 LET US SUM UP

- In this unit you learned about how Romanticism began as a reaction against Neo Classicism. You saw how Romantics with their escapist tendencies, love for

nature and free spirit stood in stark contrast to the Classicists who stood for matter, form, traditions and the like.

- You read about the achievements made by important writers in various forms of literature in both the periods.
- You also got an insight into the various movements of both the Romantic and the Victorian periods, namely, Realism, Naturalism, Symbolism, Existentialism, Oxford Movement and Pre- Raphaelite brotherhood.

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4.20 SUGGESTED READING

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4.21 TERMINAL AND MODEL QUESTIONS

- Q1. What were the reasons behind the beginning of Romanticism?
- Q2. Discuss the chief characteristics of Romanticism.
- Q3. What do you know about the Victorian novel?
- Q4. Write short notes on:
 - Pre Raphaelite Brotherhood
 - Symbolism

**UNIT 5 TWENTIETH CENTURY LITERATURE &
 SOME MAJOR MODERN MOVEMENTS**

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Objectives

5.3 A Bird's Eye View of the Age

5.4 Twentieth Century British Literature

 5.4.1 Drama

 5.4.2 Poetry

 5.4.3 Prose

5.5 Major Literary and Artistic Movements in the Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

5.6 Glossary

5.7 Let Us Sum Up

5.8 Check your Progress

5.9 Answers to Check your Progress

5.10 References

5.11 Suggested Reading

5.12 Terminal and Model Questions

5.1 INTRODUCTION

We have traced the history of English Literature right from the Anglo Saxon period to the Victorian Age. In this unit you will be introduced to the twentieth century literature, which is unlike any literature ever written before. In the twentieth century, the scientific and industrial advancement made in the Victorian Age progressed by leaps and bounds. However, with the progress made in the realm of science, human existence became more complex than ever before and man began to experience a sense of estrangement from the society and the self, which became the chief characteristic of modern life. All the traditional approaches in various disciplines petered out making way for experimentation. This saw the emergence of many new trends and movements in fields like art and literature which will be taken up in this unit.

5.2 OBJECTIVES

This unit will focus on:

- The general state of affairs in twentieth century Europe
- The literary developments of the age
- The various literary and historical movements of the ages

5.3 A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE AGE

When Queen Victoria died in 1901, her eldest son succeeded her as Edward VII. We call the years of his reign the Edwardian period, which lasted from 1901 to 1919. By the time the twentieth century dawned, considerable strides had already been made in the field of science and technology. As a result of the progress made in the various fields, people were looking forward to a better life. However, the scientific and technological advancements proved to be a bane for mankind as in the first quarter of the twentieth century itself, the first World War broke out. In this war, ten million people were killed. The First World War lasted from 1914 to 1918 and very soon, within a short span of time, the second World War also broke out which lasted from 1935-1945. This war took a higher toll on the life of people as over fifty million lives were lost. The wars exposed the sham of the modern era of “progress” and “development”, thus, shattering the illusion of the people. The wars brought with them hunger, poverty, hardship and destruction. Furthermore, with the invention of the atom bomb, the situation of people became even more critical as the world was now living under the shadow of the bomb. This was a transitional period, not just for the continent of Europe which had undergone a first hand experience of the appalling World Wars, but for the rest of the nations around the globe too who were directly or indirectly associated with the wars.

However, after the end of the second World War in 1945, the world was standing on the threshold of a new dawn and the ushering of a new dawn brought with it high hopes, great promises and immense challenges. In the post war period, the mighty British Empire crumbled down and the colonies, one by one freeing themselves of the shackles of slavery looked forward to the new dawn with anticipation. As a result of the changes world-wide, the modern age was characterised by its restlessness and apprehensiveness. The chaos, violence, disillusionment and the anxiety of the age was captured brilliantly by the writers of the age, which we will be tracing in the coming section.

5.4 TWENTIETH CENTURY BRITISH LITERATURE

The Twentieth Century British literature has undergone a sea change both in terms of subject matter and style. The writers of this time explored both the outer and the inner worlds to get ideas in order to develop their works. Many writers addressed such global concerns such as the destruction of the environment and the threat of nuclear war while others explored into the recesses of their hearts trying to seek shelter away from the nasty, cruel world outside. As a result of these explorations their works displayed enormous diversity. Furthermore, with the decline of the mighty British empire, came a blossoming of “post-colonial” literature through which writers of the erstwhile British colonies often used the English language to give expression to their thoughts.

5.4.1 DRAMA

British drama came of age in the twentieth century. The twentieth century dramatists often made use of realism in their dramas. For example, Shelagh Delaney specializes in slice-of-life dramas such as *A Taste of Honey*. Around the 1950s and the 1960s saw the emergence of a group of dramatists known as “**angry young men**” who also made use of realistic techniques in their dramas. Typical of their work is John Osborne’s *Look Back in Anger*, which focuses on a working-class youth rebelling against the establishment.

Another contemporary British drama that surfaced around this time is the **Theatre of the Absurd**. The plays of this school often feature dialogues and actions that seem senseless and disjointed, which in a way represented the disjointedness of human life of the times. The Irish born Samuel Beckett, author of *Waiting for Godot*, was the chief exponent of this technique. The early plays of Harold Pinter also show the influence of theatre of the Absurd.

Historical Drama was another category of drama which evolved in the Twentieth century. The historical Drama explores events, figures and attitudes from history. *A Man of All Seasons* by Robert Bolt is a Historical Drama which tells the story of Thomas More, the sixteenth century scholar and Catholic martyr, thus capturing the magnificence of the times gone by. In this drama, Bolt creates a narrator Common Man, who unfolds the life of Sir Thomas More. Tom Stoppard make use of a similar device in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*.

5.4.2 POETRY

The Twentieth Century British poetry was experimental in approach and the twentieth century poets abandoned rhyme and traditional meter and exhibited fresh trends in their works. These poets were influenced by the various literary and artistic movements of their times and the analysis of a twentieth century poet is more a study of trends and movements rather than the poet himself. The twentieth century poetry, very much represents the century itself. For example, with the outbreak of World War I, emerged the **War Poets**, also known as **Trench Poets**, most of whom were soldiers and had had a firsthand experience of war. The War Poets glorified war in their earlier poems. However, after witnessing the ghastliness of war, their sense of glory changed into pessimism and hopelessness. Rupert Brooke, C.N. Sarkey, Siegfried Sassoon, Wilfred, Isaac Rosenberg and David Jones were some of the War Poets. The horrific impact of the first world War left an entire generation bewildered and thus the generation came to be known as the **Lost Generation**, a term popularized by Ernest Hemmingway, who credited the phrase to Gertrude Stein, his mentor and patron. The Lost Generation includes the War Poets and some other prominent figures from the world of art and literature like F. Scott Fitzgerald, T.S. Eliot, Waldo Pierce and Dos Passos.

During the 1950s and the ‘60s, a number of outstanding British poets associated themselves with what they simply called **Movement**. This group can be likened to the ‘Angry

Young Men' in drama. These poets rejected the pompous, ornate poetry of the 1940s, represented by the verse of Dylan Thomas, and aimed to capture everyday experiences in the language of "the common man". Philip Larkin is considered to be the finest among the Movement Poets. Some other notable Movement Poets are Kingsley Amis, Donald Davie, Thom Gunn and Elizabeth Jennings.

The twentieth century British poets were very much interested in bringing the past back into the present. This they did by organizing colourful festivals through which they brought alive the Anglo Saxon and the Celtic traditions of **oral poetry** recitation. The contemporary poets recited their works in public places like the Waterloo station. One poet who gave a lot of emphasis to oral poetry was Stevie Smith, born Florence Margaret. (1902-71) who often recited her poems on British radio and television and on streets like the bards of the bygone era.

As mentioned earlier, the writers of the twentieth century experimented both with form and content. One such innovative poet was Ted Hughes (1930- '98). Hughes' primarily focused on the beauty and rawness of nature, something that had never been explored by poets earlier. Hughes's portrayal of the wild creatures in volumes of poems such as *Hawk in the Rain*, *Crow* and *Animals* evokes a world of primitive forces and untamed energy which gives a strange power to his poems. Through the figures of birds and beasts in his poems, Hughes tries to depict the ever increasing human struggle. Seamus Heaney, (born 1939) who by the American poet Robert Lowell has been considered to be "the most important Irish poet since Yeats" devoted much of his poetry to the life, history and also focused on Nature in his poems. Besides the aforementioned subjects, Heaney, like Hughes focused on Nature in his poems. William Empson, Molly Holden, Elaine Feinstein, Geoffrey Hill and the Irish poets Patrik Kavanagh and Thomas Kinsella are some more notable twentieth century poets.

5.4.3 PROSE

The twentieth century saw the printing of the inexpensive paperback books which resulted in accessibility of books for the general public as a result, the novel, which had developed considerably in the Victorian Age continued to flourish in the twentieth century as well. Graham Greene, one of the most celebrated novelists of the twentieth century came out with a string of best sellers which often dealt with Cold War politics. In his works he explores "the ambivalent moral and political issues of the modern world". William Golding described him as "the ultimate chronicler of twentieth century man's consciousness and anxiety. P.G. Wodehouse, a prolific writer of humorous short stories, plays, novels and essays made important contributions to modern English literature through notable books like *Carry On*, *Jeeves*, *the Code of the Woosters*, *Spring Fever* and *Plum Pie*. William Golding, the winner of the 1983 Nobel Prize for literature, was another great writer of the century. His most famous work, *Lord of the Flies* tells the story of a group of British school boys who revert to savage behaviour after being stranded on a tropical island. Some other twentieth century writers of eminence include Anthony Burgess, best known for his dystopian satire *A Clockwork Orange*, Kingsley Amis, famous for his novels like *Lucky Jim* and *Stanley and the Women*, John Fowles, who often experimented with novel forms as in *The Collector* which tells the same story twice – from the point of view of two different characters.

The twentieth century witnessed a series of changes in all walks of life. One welcome change that came about was the progress made by women in all fields including literature. Some eminent contemporary women writers include Margaret Drabble, well known for her much acclaimed books like *The Summer Birdcage* and *The Needle's Eye*. The Irish Iris Murdoch, whose art lay in exploring human relationships, Doris Lessing, winner of the Nobel Prize for literature in the year 2007, well known for books like *The Grass is Singing* and *The Golden Notebook* and Nadine Gordimer who writes well crafted novels and short stories "examine the moral and political dilemmas of racially divided South Africa," her native land.

Besides the above mentioned genres, short story is another form that came of age in the twentieth century. Some of the notable short story writers of the twentieth century include Irishmen Sean O'Faolain who captured the life of his native land in his works and Michael McLaverty, who in his works explored themes relating to Nature in his works, the English Alan Sillitoe who in his novels captured the plight of the working class.

Besides fiction, nonfiction has also prospered in the twentieth century. Among the noteworthy non-fictional writers of the time we have the Irish writer Laurence Durrell who besides being an ace novelist and a poet has also written a considerable number of travelogues. Anita Fraser, wife of the playwright Harold Pinter is a notable historian of contemporary times. Another well-known non-fictional writer of the twentieth century was Bertrand Russell who produced one of the best autobiographies of the century. In addition to this, the twentieth century has produced many gifted critics also. To name a few well-known contemporary critics we have David Daiches, V.S. Pritchett as well as the poets Thom Gunn and Donald Davie and the novelist Anthony Burgess and Margaret Drabble.

To conclude, the twentieth century has been a century of experimentation with writers on a relentless quest to find something new. The American poet Ezra Pound gave the slogan of "making it new" and the other writers and artists of the times followed suit as they discarded the age-old traditional practices in art and literature in favour of new trends in the fields of painting, music, architecture and literature. This led to many movements and the twentieth century became an age brimming with vibrant literary and artistic life. Now let us discuss some of the major movements of the late nineteenth and twentieth century.

5.5 MAJOR LITERARY AND ARTISTIC MOVEMENTS IN THE LATE NINETEENTH AND THE TWENTIETH CENTURIES

FIN DE SIECLE MOVEMENT

Most of the modern movements started as a reaction against the leading traits of Victorian culture in the 1890s. The writers after the last quarter of the nineteenth century rejected the traits and techniques of the Victorian writers and in doing so adopted new methods of expressing themselves. Various groups emerged during this time that rejected the methods used by their Romantic and Victorian compatriots and looked towards France for inspiration. Most of the movements which emerged during this time had many common features and at times are hard to compartmentalize. Yet, despite some common characteristics, they can be classified separately as under:

Aestheticism: Aestheticism was a philosophical movement of the late 19th century that explored the beauty in art. It started as a reaction against the materialism and commercialism, two major trends of the Victorian industrial era. Aestheticism was inspired by the thoughts of Matthew Arnold, Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelites, all of whom broke free from the main stream Victorianism in some way or the other. But the greatest inspiration behind aestheticism was the writings of Walter Pater. Pater's most important work, *Studies in the history of Renaissance* (1873), a collection of essays on Italian painters and writers from 14th to 16th centuries became a kind of manifesto of the Aesthetic Movement. Apart from Pater, the aesthetes owed much to the current French doctrine of 'L'Art pour l'Art', meaning "art for art's sake". Oscar Wilde was one of the most celebrated aesthetes. His novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) is considered to be one of the best examples of aestheticism. Among other practitioners of Aestheticism were the naturalistic novelist, George Moore, the poet Lionel Johnson, A. C. Swinburne and W. B. Yeats. An aesthetician periodical was *The Yellow Book* (1894-7), which was called because French novels, considered daring were printed on yellow paper.

Avant Garde Movement: The term was originally used to describe the foremost part of the army advancing into battles but is now applied to any group of artists who believe in using innovative and experimental ways in exploring the themes of their art work. The term implies that true artists are ahead of their times, establishing new frontiers of thought and expression. The avant garde writers were inspired by Ezra Pound's motto of "Making it new." (For details, refer to the right –up on Imagism) The avant gardists considered themselves to be "alienated" from the established order and proclaimed themselves free in every regard. One of the main aims of the avant gardists was to astonish the sensibilities of the conventional readers by introducing the bizarre element in their works. Some important avant garde figures include Gertrude Stein, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Ezra Pound and Thomas Pynchon.

Decadence: Decadence was a movement in art and literature that emerged in the late 19th century Western Europe. The term decadence is associated with the fin de siècle writers who were associated with Symbolism and Aestheticism. These writers were termed as decadents by some hostile critics for they were of the view that this group of writers valued artificial over the earlier Romantics' naïve view of nature. Later, some of the writers of this group triumphantly adopted this name, referring to themselves as 'decadents'. Furthermore, they depicted the ugly and morbid things, which were never appreciated in the literature of the previous ages, in their works. The decadents were influenced by the tradition of the Gothic novel and by the poetry of Edgar Allan Poe who were also associated with movements like symbolism and aestheticism. The classical novel *Against Nature* by Joris Karl Huysmans is often seen as the most important work of decadent literature. In Britain, the leading figures associated with the decadent movement were Oscar Wilde, Aubrey Beardsley and some other writers associated with *The Yellow Book*.

Dadaism: Dadaism was a cultural movement that began in Zurich, Switzerland during World War I and reached its peak in 1916-1922. It too was a highly experimental avant garde development. According to its founder, Tristan Tzara, the word "Dada" means "nothing". However other versions of the origin of the name also exist. According to one, the word 'Dada' was randomly picked up from a French German dictionary which means a "Hobby Horse." The Dadaists aimed at ridiculing the meaninglessness of the modern world with all its complexities, which they believed led to tensions and wars. For this reason, the Dadaist writers and artists rejected conventional modes of art and thought in favour of the nonsensical. (As mentioned earlier, the word "Dada" means nothing.) Among the its practitioners, were the sculptor Hans Arp, the artists Man Ray and Marcel Duchamp, the composer Erik Satie and the writers Jean Cocteau, Louis Aragon and Andre Breton. The movement influenced later movements like the avant garde movement, surrealism and post modernism.

Expressionism: Expressionism was a German artistic and literary movement in the early twentieth century. The Expressionists emphasized the inner experiences of individuals rather than objective external realities. Thus, they differed from the realists who dealt mainly with the grim social outer realities of the world. Through their works, the expressionists focused on the troubled aspects of life and usually exaggerated and distorted it, in order to draw people's attention towards it. Their works represent the experiences of a modern-day individual, standing lonely and dejected, in a modern day urban world with all its complexity. As the expressionists believed in portraying the inner workings of a person's mind, they gave voice to the mental states of the characters. The impact of this movement can be seen in almost all the genres of literature including drama, poetry and prose fiction. Expressionism drama flourished in Germany in the works of writers like Reinhard, Johannes Sorge, Georg Kaiser and Ernest Toller, Brecht and Piscator. German playwrights and theater directors developed a theater form that arose from expressionism in the early-mid 20th century which is known as epic theatre. German expressionist drama had a great influence on English, American as well as European art and literature. Its effect can be seen in the plays like Eugene O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*, Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, Thornton Wilder's *The Skin of White Teeth*, to name a few.

Expressionist poets departed from standard meter, syntax and poetic structure, focusing on symbols and other novel techniques in their writing. The poetry of Allen Ginsberg and other Beat writers, the prose fiction of Thomas Beckett, Kurt Vonnegut Jr. and Thomas Pynchon exhibit expressionist tendencies.

Expressionism had a considerable influence on popular culture including cinema. Film directors like Ingmar Bergman, Federico Fellini and Michelangelo Antonioni were deeply inspired by Expressionism. These directors focused on distorted perceptions and fantasies of disturbed characters.

Feminist criticism: Feminist criticism applies to criticism dealing with literature, art or any other discipline dealing with only the feminist view-point in women's issues. For example, the book *Feminist Theatre* by Helene Kayssar takes up plays written by women, for women, with female casts, concentrating mainly on female roles and how women are portrayed.

Since its emergence in the late 1960s, feminist criticism has seen many important developments. It started with the first wave of feminists whose primary concern was the fight for women's rights such as women's suffrage (right to vote) and property rights. Then came the second wave of feminist writers who fought for a wide range of issues including harassments such as sexuality, family and the workplace ones, reproductive rights, to name a few. The second wave of feminist writers radically changed the face of western culture, as due to their efforts various laws and establishments were set for the protection of women. Lastly, the third wave of feminists arrived, who attempted to redefine girls and women as assertive, powerful and in control of their sexuality. Feminist criticism emerged in the late 1960s and the book which is generally regarded as the most influential is considered to be Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*. Later Mary Ellmann's *Thinking About Women* and Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* developed de Beauvoir's approach further. Feminism has undergone a sea change since its emergence in 1960. Various schools of Feminism have been established over the years which differ from one another in various respects. For example, the black feminist critics are of the view that the feminist views expressed by the women writers as generally from the point of view of a white woman without considering the black woman's double oppression of race and sex. Similarly lesbian feminist's perception of feminism is different as they do not identify with the heterosexuality of other feminist writers.

Georgian Poetry: The term Georgian was coined by Edward Marsh who edited five anthologies of contemporary verse between the years 1912 and 1922 entitled *Georgian Poetry*. As the name suggests, these anthologies came out in the reign of King George V and also covered the poets the decade in general. The idea for this anthology began as a joke, when Edward Marsh, the painter, Duncan Grant and George Mallory, the mountaineer, decided to publish a parody of the many small poetry books that were appearing at the time. However, after some discussion, it was decided to go ahead with the idea in all seriousness. Finally, Harold Monro, a poet and bookseller, agreed to publish the book in return for a half share of the profits. However, the term is not only indefinite but also at times derogatory as Marsh's later anthologies published verse of a much poorer quality than the earlier ones. Georgian poetry was novel in its approach as it rejected traditional Victorian poetry and also remained unaffected by the *avant garde* influence of continental Europe. The most characteristic feature of Georgian poetry is that it makes use of images from the English countryside. It also captures the country customs and traditions brilliantly and therein lay its charm. The tone of Georgian poetry is colloquial which often give them a local flavor. Some of the distinguished Georgian poets include Walter de la Mare, G.K.Chesterton, D.H. Lawrence, Rupert Brook and Robert Graves.

Imagism: It was a poetic movement founded by a group led by Ezra Pound in 1912. The inspiration for this movement came from the idea of T. E. Hulme who was an anti-romantic,

believing in the words used by poets in their poems tend to make the poems difficult to understand instead of clarifying them. The imagists rejected the sentimental and discursiveness, typical of Romantic and Victorian literature, in favour of clear and sharp language.

The following can be listed as the chief characteristics of Imagism:

- Direct treatment of things, whether subjective or objective
- Exact use of the language of common speech
- Creation of new rhythms for new moods
- Complete freedom in subject matter
- Use of clear images

As the Imagists were the first ones to use the above mentioned innovative techniques in their works they can rightly be called the first true modernist poets. Imagism can be considered an Anglo American movement as Ezra Pound, its founder was an American, but when he founded Imagism, he was living in Europe and was highly influenced by the various literary and artistic developments being made in Europe at that time. Furthermore, the Imagists took out two periodicals, one an English, *The Egoist* (started in 1914) and the other one an American, *Poetry* (from 1912). Pound was the most distinguished of the imagists, but later separated from the movement in 1914. Other noted figures of Imagism were: F.S. Flint, Amy Lowell, Hilda Doolittle and Richard Aldington.

Impressionism: Impressionism was a 19th century art movement that originated with a group of Paris based artists which later influenced many contemporary writers who adopted a style of these painters in writing. The impressionists were of the opinion that nothing can be known in itself. One has only the impression of the particular observation from his particular relation to the object at a particular moment in time. Symbolists like Baudelaire, Mallarme, Rimbaud, Verlaine and Laforgue were the chief exponents of Impressionism.

In England, the movement owed much to Walter Pater who, in his famous *Conclusion to Studies in the History of Renaissance*, declared that a critic must first examine his own reactions in judging a piece of art. Similarly, the critic Arthur Symons felt that the impressionists should record their sensitivity to experience and not just rely on the experience itself. In Oscar Wilde's poem, "Impression Du Matin", perhaps influenced by Whistler's painting, the impressionist technique is apparent in the subjectivity of description. In the modern novel, impressionism frequently refers to the technique of centering on the mental life of the chief character rather than on the chief characters. Writers such as Marcus Proust, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf focus on their characters' memories, associations and inner emotional reactions. For example, in *Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*, Joyce presents Stephen Dedalus' incoherent feelings giving little importance to his physical surroundings.

Literature of the Absurd: In the 20th century philosophy of Existentialism, the French writer Albert Camus used the term to describe the futility of human existence, which he compared to the story of Sisyphus, the figure in Greek mythology condemned for eternity to push a stone to the top of a mountain only to have it roll back down again. The principle of absurd developed in the wake of the two world wars. Frank Kafka, in his fiction, depicts guilt ridden people who are alienated and grotesquely comical. In the 1950s, a group of playwrights created a new form of drama, which the critic Martin Esslin named "the theatre of the absurd", the plays that abandoned traditional construction and conventional dialogue. These plays were notable for their illogical structure and the irrational behavior of their characters. The most important absurdist playwright was Samuel Beckett, whose *Waiting for Godot* (1953) and *Endgame* (1957) had a revolutionary

impact on modern drama. Other influential “absurdist” include Eugene Ionesco, Arthur Adamov in France, Harold Pinter in England and Edward Albee in the United States. In fiction, two of the best known novels in the 1950s and the 60s are Joseph Heller’s *Catch 22* and Gunther Grass’s *The Tin Drum*.

Modernism: Modernism is widely used to identify with can be called a development in literature and the arts that began in the late 19th century. However, it was only after the First World War that it emerged into the limelight. The ghastly First World War radically changed the face of the earth and thereafter, in the words of Virginia Woolf, “the human nature underwent a fundamental change.” As the modernists were concerned with the issues that confronted the modern man, they broke away from traditional approaches towards literature, which they felt were becoming outdated and explored new themes and forms in literature that would mirror the fragmentariness of an increasingly industrial and “globalized” world. The modernist movement can be said to have begun with Imagism as the modernist followed the footsteps of the Imagist leader Ezra Pound who gave the slogan of making it new. (Refer to the note on Imagism) The modernist were concerned with the trauma and anguish faced by the modern day man. The critic Denis Donoghue declared, “Modernism is concerned with the validity of one’s feelings and the practice of converting apparently external images and events into inwardness, personal energy.” The Modernists are thus characterized by their self consciousness, which led to experimentation with form and subject. Furthermore, the modernists make extensive use of symbols and motifs in their works. Some of the important modernist writers and their important works are: James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, *Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*; Virginia Woolf’s *Jacob’s Room* and T.S. Eliot’s *The Wasteland*, *Four Quartets*; Ezra Pound’s *Riposte*; Marcel Proust’s *Du Cote de chez Swann* and Franz Kafka’s “Metamorphosis”, *The Trial* and *The Castle*. *The Wasteland* by T.S. Eliot is a brilliant example of Modernism, in which exposes the hollowness and fragmentariness of modern life. However, unlike the post modern poems, the dissimilar components of the poem “are related by connections that are left to the reader to discover or invent.”(Abrams)

Nihilism: Nihilism was originally a Russian movement in 1860s which rejected all authorities. Nihilism is derived from the Latin word “nihil” meaning “nothing”. The term Nihilism was first popularized by the Russian novelist Ivan Turgenev in his novel *Fathers and Sons* and later introduced into philosophical discourses by Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi. The Nihilists called themselves so because “nothing that then existed found favour in their eyes.” The Nihilists see all existence, including that which is based on science as empty and meaningless. Nihilism is often associated with the 19th century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche who called the search of truth as an illusion. Some of the othe famous nihilist writers include Franz Kafka and Samuel Beckett.

Post- Modernism: As the name Post Modern suggests, it was a literary and artistic movement that took place after modernism and in many ways was a continuation of modernism which, as suggested by Walt Whitman, was a progressive movement. However, by the late 1960s, modernism, which had started as a reaction against the sentimentalism and discursiveness of the Romantic and the Victorian Ages, started becoming old fashioned and conventional, as a result, the writers of the late sixties started showing tendencies of breaking away from the various modernist forms. Thus, in many ways Post Modernism was a counter Modernism movement in many ways which started in the late 1960s and came into the limelight in the 1970s. As mentioned earlier, the Post modernists, like the modernists, exposed the fragmentariness of modern life, and sometimes even took it to an extreme, however, unlike the modernists, who were structured and poetical in their approach, the post modernists, however, did not adhere to any traditional mode of writing as they experimented with form and subject to the highest possible degree and thought the fragmentariness of their works mirrored the disintegration of the world around. Another major difference between the modernists and the post modernists was that the postmodernists approach

towards literature was more critical than the modernists. They also made extensive use of parody, pastiche, pub-talk, pop songs and other new developments that emerged in the twentieth century to portray traditional ideas and practices in a non-traditional way. Post-Modernism owes its origin to French intellectuals like Jean-François Lyotard and Jean Baudrillard. The progressive thinking of Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault and Roland Barthes also influenced the movement to a great extent. Literary post-modernism was officially launched in the United States with the first issue of *Boundary 2*, subtitled '*Journal of Post Modern Literature and Culture*'. Some other well-known post-modern authors are Vladimir Nabokov, William S. Burroughs, Donald Barthelme, Thomas Pynchon, Angela Carter, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Salman Rushdie. All the above-mentioned authors are post-modern in the sense that they have had a first-hand experience of contemporary life, and in their works they celebrate its hollowness, fragmentariness and alienation.

Stream of Consciousness: Stream of Consciousness is a narrative mode in literature that has its origin in psychology and it refers to the flow of thoughts in an individual's conscious mind. Stream of Consciousness made its way into literature through the efforts of May Sinclair who introduced the term in literature which flowered primarily in the form of novel. This narrative technique seeks to portray an individual's point of view by giving a written equivalent of the character's thought processes as if they were coming directly from a character's mind. The writer does this either through an interior monologue or in connection with his or her actions. As a result, the events in a novel that exploits the stream of consciousness technique are mingled with the character's ongoing feelings and memories instead of being arranged in a chronological manner. The term stream of consciousness was taken from William James' book *The Principles of Psychology*. It was also developed by writers such as Dorothy Richardson, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner. The stream of consciousness writing is used to reveal a character's complex psychology and to present it in realistic detail.

Surrealism: An artistic and literary movement that laid importance on the unconscious in artistic creativity. Surrealism owes its origin to the French poet and critic André Breton who laid the foundation of the movement in 1924 after breaking away from Dada, another avant-garde development which focused on the mind. As surrealism deals with mind, the surrealists developed a series of principles that stressed on the importance of dreams and the subconscious mind. Among the leading surrealists of the 20s and the 30s were the dramatists Jean Cocteau, the poet Paul Éluard, the painter Salvador Dalí and the filmmaker Luis Buñuel. Like Dada, surrealism proved to be more significant in its general impact than in the specific achievements of painters and writers. Over the years, surrealism moved into various sub-genres and surrealist techniques like automatic writing, discontinuous images and extended dream sequences have exerted an important influence on contemporary literature and film.

5.6 GLOSSARY:

Automatic writing: Automatic writing or psychography is writing which the writer states to be produced from the subconscious and / or spiritual source without conscious awareness of the content.

Colloquial: characteristic of spoken language or of writing that is used to create the effect of conversation.

Subconscious: mental activity not directly perceived by the consciousness, from which memories, feelings or thoughts can influence behavior without realization of it.

Monologue: a long uninterrupted speech during a conversation

Lesbian: a woman who is sexually attracted to other women

Dystopia: an imaginary place where everything is as bad as it possibly can be.

Motif: an important and sometimes recurring theme or idea in a work.

Symbol: something that stands for or represents something else, especially an object representing an abstraction.

Pastiche: a piece of creative work, e.g. in literature, drama or art, that is a mixture of things borrowed from other works.

Discursiveness: covering a wide field of subjects, ramblings; proceeding to a conclusion through reason than intuition.

Hobby horse: a toy horse; A term used by folklorists to refer to the costumed characters that feature in some traditional seasonal costumes, processions and similar observances around the world.

Interior Monologue: It is also known as inner voice, internal speech or verbal stream of consciousness is thinking in words. It can also refer to the semi-constant internal monologue one which has with oneself at a conscious or semi-conscious level.

Counter: Something that contradicts or opposes something that already exists

5.7 LET US SUM UP

- In this unit you got a glimpse of the first half of the twentieth century. The first fifty years of the century were catastrophic due to the two world wars.
- The unit focused on the British literary scene of the twentieth century, highlighting the achievements made in various literary fields.
- You saw how the writers of this time rejected traditional practices in writing and used experimental techniques in both form and content which led to a number of modern movements in arts and literature, some of which were discussed one by one in this unit.

5.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. What is the period of Edward VII's reign known as?

Q2. What impact did the two World Wars have on the lives of people of the times?

Q3. Which writer gave the slogan of "making it new"?

Q4. What is the English equivalent of 'L'Art pour l' Art'?

Q5. Why *The Yellow Book* was called so?

Q6. Name any two 'Avant Garde' writers.

Q7. Which writer is known as the father of Confessional Poetry?

Q8. What does the word "DADA" mean?

Q9. What do the expressionists focus on?

Q10. Name two expressionist playwrights.

Q11. What did the first wave of feminist writers focus on?

5.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

A1. Edwardian Period

A2. Refer to the write-up at 5.3.

A3. Ezra Pound

A4. “Art for Art’s Sake”

A5. Refer to the write-up at 5.5. (Aestheticism)

A6. Gertrude Stein, James Joyce

A7. Robert Lowell

A8. Refer to the write-up at 5.5. (Dadaism)

A9. Refer to the write-up at 5.5. (Expressionism)

A10. Georg Kaiser, Bertolt Brecht

A11. Refer to the write-up at 5.5.(Feminist Criticism)

5.10 REFERENCES

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5.11 SUGGESTED READING

1.Quinn, Edward.A Dictionary of Literary and Thematic Terms, U.S.A., Checkmark Books. Print.

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3. Abrams, M.H.(ed) Norton Anthology, London, UK.: W.W. Norton and Company. Print.

5.12 TERMINAL AND MODEL QUESTIONS

Q1. Which imagist writer broke free from the movement later on?

Q2. What is the view held about art by the impressionists?

Q3. Which plays are notable for their illogical structure and irrational behavior of their characters. Give one example of one such play.

Q4. Which modern artistic movement focuses on techniques such as automatic writing and extended dream sequences?

Q5. Write short notes on the following:

- Stream of Consciousness
- Post Colonialism
- Impressionism
- Dadaism

UNIT 6 SOME WORLD LITERARY MOVEMENTS AND TRENDS

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Objectives
- 6.3 Some World Literary Movements and Trends
- 6.4 Glossary
- 6.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 6.6 Check your Progress
- 6.7 Answers to Check your Progress
- 6.8 References
- 6.9 Suggested Reading
- 6.10 Terminal and Model Questions

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the last five units you read about the history of English literature and some major philosophical, literary and artistic movements of the European mainland and the British Isles. While reading the various movements, did you notice that most of the movements were related to two or more disciplines. Did you ever wonder why a movement that arose in the field of art also affected literature or how a movement that began as a philosophical movement also influenced literature at large? To answer this question, this is mainly due to the fact that a movement develops out of a reaction to a particular situation, be it social, cultural, economic or any other, which remains the same for all disciplines in a particular time. It would also be interesting to note that most of the world movements are likewise affected by the developments and movements of Europe. For instance, the effect of the European literary and artistic movements influenced America and brought its artists closer to the European centres of art and nearly all the major poets became part of the ‘avant garde’, which has been discussed in the previous unit. This unit will list a few important literary and cultural movements that have taken place in the English speaking countries of the world excepting the British Isles.

6.2 OBJECTIVES

In this unit you will be

- acquainted with some of the major American movements like American Renaissance, Beat Movement, Confessional School of Poetry, Harlem Renaissance and a few more
- introduced to some other movements and literary trends like Orientalism and Post Colonialism, from some other parts of the English speaking world, especially the former British colonies.

6.3 SOME WORLD LITERARY MOVEMENTS AND TRENDS

Literature constantly evolves as new movements emerge to speak of the concerns of different groups of people and historical periods. Writers of a particular movement often have similar subject matter, writing style or thought. Getting acquainted with the movements discussed below will help you in getting a sense of the context in which the various writers wrote.

American Renaissance: The period in American literature that saw the flowering of American literature is known as American Renaissance. This term was first used by the American critic F.O. Matthiessen to describe Emerson’s *Essays* and *Poems*, Thoreau’s *Walden*, Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter*, Melville’s *Moby Dick* and Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*. However, the term was later applied to the entire body of American literature thirty years preceding the Civil War which included works of stalwarts like Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Oliver Wendell Holmes, John Greenleaf Whittier and James Russell Lowell.

Beat Poets: Beat refers to a group of American writers who came into prominence during the 1950s. The beat movement was a counter culture movement that questioned the middle class American values. Although there are various views regarding the origin of the term “beat” but the most widely held view is that it is the abbreviated form of “beaten down”, as the writers of the movement felt tired and beaten down by the conventional American standards. The Beat writers were generally centered in New York and San Francisco and celebrated individual freedom, Zen Buddhism and the free use of drugs. They popularized reading poetry in cafes and jazz clubs. The most celebrated Beat poets were the poets Allen Ginsberg and the novelist Jack Kerouac. The full

impact of the beat movement was to be seen less in literature than in the general culture, especially in the hippy and the student movement of the 1960s.

Confessional Poetry: Confessional Poetry was the name for a type of post-World War II American Poetry in which the poet reveals his or her personal life. The first writer to use confessional writing was the poet Robert Lowell. Lowell felt that the writing of poetry had become too intellectual and impersonal and needed a “breakthrough back into life.” Traditionally when the writers used the first- person pronoun, “I” in a poem, readers were taught to think of the “I” as the speaker of the poem, not the poet himself or herself. Even when the “I” clearly did refer to the poet, the poet tended to reveal little about his or her doubts, frustrations and painful experiences. In *Life Studies*, however, Lowell openly expressed his thoughts and feelings concerning his family, his experiences and his personal problems. *Life Studies* had a powerful influence on two younger poets, Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton. Plath’s *Ariel* (1965), is a collection of brilliant, angry, suicidal revelations but two years before their publication, she took her own life. The title of Sexton’s first book of poetry, *To Bedlam and Part Way Back*, reveals the personal anguish that motivated her poetry. Like Plath, Sexton also took her own life. Other prominent poets associated with the confessional school include Theodore Roethke and John Berryman.

Determinism: Determinism was originally a term applied in theology which dealt with the predetermination of soul as advocated by Calvin. (see Block 1, Unit 2, Glossary) In literature, the issues implied by determinism have been expressed in the debate over the relative importance of character vs. fate in the analysis of Tragedy. In the nineteenth century scientific determinism played an important role in the formation of Naturalism. (see Block 1, Unit 4, Naturalism)

Harlem Renaissance: Harlem Renaissance was an African American literary and cultural movement that took place in the 1920s in Harlem, a ghetto in New York City. With this awakening, the blacks were emancipated as they fought the final “war” for their rights to equal status in America’s social and cultural life, half a century after the abolition of slavery. The movement’s manifesto came out in Alain Locke’s anthology *The New Negro* (1925), which called for the incorporation of the African artistic heritage as an enrichment of American culture. Some of the most prominent Harlem Renaissance writers include Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, Wallace Thurman, Claude McKay and Countee Cullen. Zora Neale Hurston’s *Their Eyes Were Watching God* is generally considered the best work of Harlem Renaissance.

Hispanic-American Literature: It is a term used for the literature of Americans with a Spanish speaking tradition. Under this literature, there are two groups: the Chicano/Chicana group or Mexican Americans and the Latino/Latina group, from Latin America or the Caribbean islands. At times the term Latino/Latina is used for both groups.

Chicano literature dates back to the year 1848, the year in which the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ceded the lands of the Southwest to the United States. Although the people of these lands were now American, they continued to carry out their cultural affairs in Spanish for nearly a century. Chicano literature written in English first attracted attention with the publication of Antonio Villareal’s *Pocho*, a novel about a young Mexican American. Other well known examples of Chicano literature include Rudolpho Anaya’s *Bless Me, Ultima* and *Tortuga*, Sandra Cisneros’ *The House on Mango Street*. The poet Gary Soto’s *The Elements of San Joaquin* and Gloria Anzaldua’s *Borderlands*, a collection of essays and reflections on the identity crisis affecting Mexican Americans.

Latino literature has mainly been famous for two outstanding memoirs by two New York based Puerto Ricans namely Piri Thomas’ *Down These Mean Streets* and Edward Rivera’s *Family Installments*. Two of group’s best-known poets, Miguel Algarin and Miguel Pinero, have

anthologized the works of these New York-based Puerto Rican poets. However, Latino novel came into prominence in 1990 with Oscar Hijuelo's *The Mambo King Plays Songs of Love*, for which he received the prestigious Pulitzer Prize. Another well-known novelist and poet from the Dominican Republic is Julia Alvarez, whose novel *In a Time of the Butterflies* was nominated for the 1995 National Book Critics Circle Award.

Knickerbocker group: The Knickerbocker group of writers was a group of writers who lived in New York in the first half of the nineteenth century. The name comes from "Diedrich Knickerbocker", a pseudonym used by Washington Irving for his *History of New York* (1809). Besides Washington Irving, other prominent members of the group include the poet William Cullen Bryant and the playwright John Howard Payne.

Lost Generation: A term mainly used to describe a group of young American writers of the 1920s who experienced alienation and the loss of ideals resulting from World War I and its aftermath. Gertrude Stein is credited with bringing the term "Lost Generation" to use and is derived from a comment she made to Ernest Hemmingway, "You are all a lost generation." Hemmingway used the quotation as an epigraph to his novel *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), which describes the disillusionment of a group of young people in the wake of the war. However, there are other uses of the phrase. The term was also used for the period from the end of World War I to the beginning of Great Depression. In Europe, they are generally known as the 'generation of 1914' for the year World War I began. In France, the country in which many expatriates settle, they were sometimes called "the generation in flames."

Native American literature: When Columbus arrived in North America, the land was inhabited by a number of native tribes who were of different cultures and spoke different languages. Around that time, around 350 languages were spoken in the land. The Native Americans had their own literature which was oral, meant to be performed not read. The first writings in English by Native Americans were autobiographical. The earliest of these was William Apess's *A Son of Forest*. The first novel by a Native American was Sophia Alice Callahan's *Wynema*. However, Native American literature came into prominence with the publication of N. Scott Momaday's Pulitzer winning novel *House Made of Dawn*. The success of Momaday, opened doors to a number of talented Native American writers like Leslie Marmon Silko, Louise Erdrich and James Welch in fiction, Simon Ortiz in poetry and Joy Harjo and Sherman Alexie in criticism. In non-fiction, Vine Deloria's *Custer Died For Your Sins* and Dee Brown's *Bury My Head at Wounded Knee* are classics.

Negritude: A movement initiated in the 1930s by the black writers residing in French colonies of Africa and the West Indies. The term refers to the conservation of traditional African culture, which in the 1930s was being replaced by the European way of life. In many ways it can be called a forerunner of many post colonial literatures.

Orientalism: Orientalism refers to the Orient or in contrast to the Occident or West, and often as seen by the West. In its neutral sense, a term used to describe Western scholarship dealing with the Orient. In another usage, it refers to the Western perception of the Eastern cultures. Since the eighteenth century, it has also been a term used for oriental studies. However, the term surfaced in the literary world in the year 1978 with the publication of Edward Said's controversial book *Orientalism*. The book is a critique of Western tradition in which interpretations of the East are made from the point of view of an outsider, which Said states is a result of European imperialistic tendencies. Said's work has given rise to a new discipline called Post colonialism or Post colonial studies.

Post-colonial studies: Post colonial studies refer to literary and cultural studies that emphasize the cultures of European empires on their former colonies. Post Colonial studies

critically examine European depiction of the colonial peoples and the production of a “counter discourse” aimed to resist the continued encroachments of Eastern/ American cultures on their former colonies. The term covers such categories as Third World, British Commonwealth and Middle Eastern Countries. The roots of Post colonial studies lie in earlier colonial movements such as Negritude and the writings of Frantz Fanon (*Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*.) With the publication of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* in the year 1961, post colonial studies became known in the Anglo American literary circles. Since that time the impact of colonialism has been explored in the French and English speaking parts of Africa and the Caribbean, in India and Southeast Asia and in the cultures of indigenous populations affected by European settlers, such as the Australian aborigines. Some of the well known post colonial novelists include Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Salman Rushdie and V.S. Naipaul. Among the distinguished post colonial critics are Gayatri Spivak, Henry Louis Gates and Kwame Appiah.

Transcendentalism: American Transcendentalism was a New England literary and philosophical movement that was born out of Romanticism and German Transcendental philosophy propounded by the German philosopher Immanuel Kant which had inspired the English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge also. The Transcendentalists emphasised on intuitive power which they felt was a central means of understanding reality. The Transcendentalists believed that the individual’s soul mirrored the world’s soul and that we can realise it by communicating with the beauty and goodness of Nature as God is present in Nature. One of the most prominent members of Transcendentalism, Ralph Waldo Emerson, in the essay titled *Nature*, says that nature “is the apparition of God...the organ through which the universal spirit speaks to the individual and strives to lead the individual back to it.” Besides Emerson, some other important Transcendentalists were Margaret Fuller, Bronson Alcott, Henry David Thoreau and Nathaniel Hawthorne. The Transcendentalists also took out a quarterly journal *The Dial*, which served as a vehicle of transcendental thought.

6.4 GLOSSARY

Ghetto: A ghetto is a part of a city predominantly occupied by a particular group, especially because of social and economic reasons, or because they have been forced to live there. The term was originally used in Venice to describe the area where Jews were compelled to live. The term now refers to an overcrowded urban area often associated with specific ethnic or racial populations living below poverty line. Statistically, ghettos have a higher crime rate than other parts of the city.

Hippy: The hippy subculture was originally a youth movement that arose in the U.S. during the 1960s and spread to other countries of the world. The hippies inherited the counter culture values of the Beat generation.

Zen: Zen is a school of Mahayana Buddhism which originated in China during the 6th century and spread to Vietnam, Korea and Japan. The word “Zen” is derived from the Sanskrit word “dhyana” which can be approximately translated as “absorption” or “meditative state”.

Harlem: Harlem is a neighbourhood in the New York City borough of Manhattan, which since the 1920s has been a major African American residential, cultural and business centre. It is named after Haarlem, in the North capital city of the province of North Holland.

Great Depression: The Great Depression was a severe worldwide depression in the decade preceding World War II, which had devastating effect on countries both rich and poor. The timing of the Great Depression varied across nations, but in most countries it started in 1930 and lasted

until the late 1940s. It was the longest, most widespread and the deepest depression of the 20th century. The depression originated in the U.S. , after the fall in the stock prices that began around September 4, 1929 and became worldwide news with the stock market crash of October 29, 1929, known as Black Tuesday.

6.5 LET US SUM UP

- In this unit you read about some major American movements, beginning with American Renaissance, which saw the emergence of literary giants like Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne and Melville. You were also introduced to the Harlem Renaissance, yet another landmark in the history of American literature, with which came the blossoming of African American literature, art and culture. Through this unit you were acquainted with Hispanic American literature, an important genre of American literature. In addition to the aforementioned, some other important american literary trends and movements like Transcendentalism, Beat Movement, Confessional School of Poetry and a fer more were taken up.
- You saw how Orientalism and Post colonial literature, literary phenomenon of the East and the former colonies of Imperial Britain emphasize on the need of re-interpreting literature from the point of view of the orientals and the marginalized.

6.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. Match the following:

Col. A	Col. B
Emerson	<i>Leaves of Grass</i>
Thoreau	<i>Moby Dick</i>
Melville	<i>Walden</i>
Whitman	<i>Essays and Poems</i>

Q2. Name two writers of the Beat generation.

Q3. Who was the founder of Confessional School of Poetry?

Q4. *Their Eyes Were Watching God* is a famous work by _____ .

Q5. Which famous American writer used the pseudonym Diedrich Knickerbocker?

Q6. Name the author of the book *Orientalism*.

Q7. What does Post Colonial literature refer to?

Q8. Name the quarterly journal taken out by the Transcendentalists.

6.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- A1. Emerson *Essays and Poems*
 Thoreau *Walden*

Melville *Moby Dick*

Whitman *Leaves of Grass*

A2. Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg

A3. Robert Lowell

A4. Zora Neale Hurston

A5. Washington Irving

A6. Edward Said

A7. See section 6.3

A8. *The Dial*

6.8 REFERENCES

1. Quinn, Edward. A Dictionary of Literary and Thematic Terms, U.S.A., Checkmark Books. Print.

6.9 SUGGESTED READING

1. Quinn, Edward. A Dictionary of Literary and Thematic Terms, U.S.A., Checkmark Books. Print.

2. Cuddon, J.A. A Dictionary of Literary Terms, London, UK.: Penguin. 1976. Print.

3. Abrams, M.H. (ed) Norton Anthology, London, UK.: W.W. Norton and Company. Print.

6.10 TERMINAL AND MODEL QUESTIONS

Q1. Write short notes on the following:

- Hispanic American Literature
- Lost Generation
- Negritude
- Native American Literature

Q2. Do you agree with the philosophy of the Transcendentalists? Give reasons for your answer.

UNIT 7 THE LANGUAGE OF POETRY

7.1 Introduction

7.2 Objectives

7.3 English Prosody

7.3.1 Foot

7.3.2 Accent

7.3.3 Dactyl

7.3.4 Iamb

7.3.5 Meter

7.3.6 Rhyme

7.3.7 Syllable

7.4 Poetic Devices

7.4.1 Conceit

7.4.2 Imagery

7.4.3 Metaphor

7.4.4 Alliteration

7.4.5 Consonance and Assonance

7.5 Stanza

7.6 Figures of Speech

7.6.1 Symbol

7.6.2 Hyperbole and Understatement

7.6.3 Metonymy

7.6.4 Personification

7.6.5 Onomatopoeia

7.6.6 Paradox

7.6.7 Oxymoron

7.6.8 Simile and Epic Simile

7.6.9 Allegory

7.7 Summary

7.8 Suggested Reading

7.9. Terminal and Model Questions

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous block you read in detail about the development and movements in literature across ages. Now we will go through the realm of poetry and discuss the various elements which are used to elevate the emotions, feelings and thoughts to the level of language which we call poetry. In this unit we will discuss the pattern of language and the devices used to create excellent literary impressions.

7.2 OBJECTIVES

The aim of this unit is to introduce you to the various terms and devices used by the writers to make their creations literary. After finishing this unit you will be able to identify and understand the various literary devices and figures of speech used by the writers.

7.3 ENGLISH PROSODY

Prosody refers to the analysis of the technical elements of poetry. It can be understood as the study of poetic metre and of the art of versification, including rhyme, stanzaic forms, and the quantity and stress of syllables. Here we will go through some of the technical devices used to achieve the desired effect.

7.3.1 Accent

Accent in prosody means a rhythmically significant stress on the syllables of a verse, usually at regular intervals. The word *accent* is often used interchangeably with *stress*, though sometimes it is used to mean the emphasis that is determined by the normal meaning of the words while *stress* is used to mean metrical emphasis. In classical prosody, which was based on a quantitative approach to verse rather than the modern stress-based system, accent was used to determine the relative quantity and prominence of a syllable based on sound. For the Greeks, accent was explained as a difference in musical pitch, usually higher, used in the pronunciation of a word. When prosody ceased to be based on quantity, the accent changed from variation of pitch to variation of force or emphasis.

7.3.2 Foot

The **foot** is the basic metrical unit that generates a line of verse. The unit is composed of syllables, the number of which is limited, with a few variations, by the sound pattern the foot represents. The most common feet in English are the *iamb*, *trochee*, *dactyl*, and *anapaest*.

7.3.2.1 Anapaest

Anapaest means a rhythmic pattern that has two light stresses followed by a final heavy stress. Edgar Allan Poe used anapaestic lines in *Annabel Lee* when he wrote:

For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.

In the first line the words "For" and "the" are light stresses, and the word "moon" is a heavy stress; that is the first anapaest. "Never" has two syllables, and both are light stress, and "beams" is heavy; that is another anapaestic unit.

7.3.2.2 Dactyl

In quantitative verse, such as Greek or Latin, a dactyl is a long syllable followed by two short syllables, as determined by syllable weight. In accentual verse, such as English, it is a stressed syllable followed by two unstressed syllables—the opposite is the anapaest (two unstressed followed by a stressed syllable).

7.3.2.3 Iamb

Iamb can be referred to one of the feet of the meter. In classical prosody it refers to a short syllable followed by a long syllable and in accentual-syllabic verse it refers to a foot comprising an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable.

7.3.3 Meter

In verse and poetry, meter is a recurring pattern of stressed (accented, or long) and unstressed (unaccented, or short) syllables in lines of a set length. For example, suppose a line contains ten syllables (set length) in which the first syllable is unstressed, the second is stressed, the third is unstressed, the fourth is stressed, and so on until the line reaches the tenth syllable. The line would look like the following one (the opening line of Shakespeare's "Sonnet 18") containing a pattern of unstressed and stressed syllables. The stressed syllables are capitalized.

Shall I com **PARE** thee **TO** a **SUM** mer's **DAY**?

Each pair of unstressed and stressed syllables makes up a unit called a **foot**

7.3.4 Rhyme

A **rhyme** is a repetition of similar sounds in two or more words. Two words rhyme if their final stressed vowel and all following sounds are identical; two lines of poetry rhyme if their final strong positions are filled with rhyming words. A rhyme in the strict sense is also called a perfect rhyme. Examples are *sight* and *flight*, *deign* and *gain*, *madness* and *sadness*.

From childhood's hour I have not been	a
As others were; I have not seen	a
As others saw; I could not bring	b
My passions from a common spring	b

(Alone – Edgar Allan Poe)

7.3.5 Syllable

A **syllable** is a unit of organization for a sequence of speech sounds. For example, the word *water* is composed of two syllables: *wa* and *ter*. A syllable is typically made up of a syllable nucleus (most often a vowel) with optional initial and final margins (typically, consonants).

Syllables are often considered the phonological "building blocks" of words. They can influence the rhythm of a language, its prosody, its poetic meter and its stress patterns

Check your Progress

- a. What do you understand by prosody?
- b. Differentiate between anapaest and dactyl.
- c. What do you understand by rhyme? Give examples.
- d. Define syllable.

7.4 Poetic Devices

Poetry is the expression of emotions. There are various methods of arrangement of words, called poetic devices which help the writer to provide the desired effect of a poetic creation.

7.4.1 Conceit

Originally meaning a concept or image, "conceit" came to be the term for figures of speech which establish a striking parallel, between two very dissimilar things or situations. English poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries adapted the term from the Italian "conchetto." Two types of conceit are often distinguished by specific names:

- a) 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 worn-out in some of his imitators among the *Elizabethan* sonneteers. Shakespeare (who at times employed this type of conceit himself) *parodied* some standard comparisons by Petrarchan sonneteers in his Sonnet 130, beginning:

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red:
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.

- b) 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 famous sustained conceit is Donne's parallel (in "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning") between the continuing relationship of his and his lady's soul during their physical parting, and the coordinated movements of the two feet of a draftsman's compass. An oft-cited instance of the chilly ingenuity of the metaphysical conceit when it is overdriven is Richard Crashaw's description, in his mid-seventeenth-century poem "Saint Mary Magdalene," of the tearful eyes of the repentant Magdalene as

two faithful fountains
Two walking baths, two weeping motions,
Portable and compendious oceans.

With the great revival of interest in the metaphysical poets during the early decades of the twentieth century, a number of modern poets exploited this type of figure. Examples are T. S. Eliot's comparison of the evening to "a patient etherized upon a table" at the beginning of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock".

7.4.2 Imagery

Imagery is the use of vivid language to generate ideas and/or evoke mental images, not only of the visual sense, but of sensation and emotion as well. While most commonly used in reference to figurative language, imagery can apply to any component of a poem that evoke sensory experience and emotional response, and also applies to the concrete things so brought to mind. Poetry works its magic by the way it uses words to evoke "images" that carry depths of meaning. The poet's carefully described impressions of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch can be transferred to the thoughtful reader through imaginative use and combinations of diction. In addition to its more tangible initial impact, effective imagery has the potential to tap the inner wisdom of the reader to arouse meditative and inspirational responses. Related images are often clustered or scattered throughout a work, thus serving to create a particular *mood* or *tone*.

In his *In Memoriam* (1850), for example, Tennyson's imagery encompasses not only things that are visible, but also qualities that are smelled or heard, together with a suggestion, in the adjective "summer," of warmth:

Unloved, that beech will gather brown,...

And many a rose-carnation feed

With summer spice the humming air....

7.4.3 Metaphor

In a **metaphor**, a word or expression that in literal usage denotes one kind of thing is applied to a distinctly different kind of thing, without asserting a comparison. For example, if Burns had said "O my love is a red, red rose" he would have uttered, technically speaking, a metaphor instead of a simile.

A **mixed metaphor** conjoins two or more obviously diverse metaphoric vehicles. Densely figurative poets such as Shakespeare, however, often mix metaphors in a functional way.

One example is the complex involvement of vehicle within vehicle, applied to the process of aging, in Shakespeare's Sonnet 65:

O, how shall summer's honey breath hold out

Against the wrackful siege of battering days?

A **dead metaphor** is one which, has been used so long and become so common that its users have ceased to be aware of the discrepancy between vehicle and tenor.

The recorded history of language indicates that most words that we now take to be literal were, in the distant past, metaphors. Metaphors are essential to the functioning of language and have been

the subject of copious analyses, and sharp disagreements, by rhetoricians, linguists, literary critics, and philosophers of language.

7.4.4 Alliteration

Alliteration 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 recurrent sound begins a word or a stressed syllable within a word. Alliteration is used only for special stylistic effects, such as to reinforce the meaning, to link related words, or to provide tone color and enhance the palpability of enunciating the words. An example is the repetitions of the *s*, *th*, and *w* consonants in Shakespeare's Sonnet 30:

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste....

7.4.5 Consonance & Assonance

Consonance is the repetition of a sequence of two or more consonants, but with a change in the intervening vowel: live-love, lean-alone, pitter-patter. W. H. Auden's poem of the 1930s, "O where are you going?" said reader to rider," makes prominent use of this device; the last stanza reads:

"Out of this house"—said *rider* to *reader*,
"Yours never will"—said *farer* to *fearer*,
"They're looking for you" said *hearer* to *honor*,
As he left them there, as he left them there.

Assonance is the repetition of identical or similar vowels—especially in stressed syllables—in a sequence of nearby words. Note the recurrent long *i* in the opening lines of Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (1820):

Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster child of silence and slow time....

7.5 Stanza

A division of a poem created by arranging the lines into a unit, often repeated in the same pattern of meter and rhyme throughout the poem; a unit of poetic lines (a "paragraph" within the poem). The stanzas within a poem are separated by blank lines. Stanzas in modern poetry, such as *free verse*, often do not have lines that are all of the same length and meter, nor even the same

number of lines in each stanza. Stanzas created by such irregular line groupings are often dictated by meaning, as in paragraphs of prose.

Stanza Forms: The names given to describe the number of lines in a stanzaic unit, such as: *couplet* (2), *tercet* (3), *quatrain* (4), *quintet* (5), *sestet* (6), *septet* (7), and *octave* (8). Some stanzas follow a set rhyme scheme and meter in addition to the number of lines and are given specific names to describe them, such as, *ballad meter*, *ottava rima*, *rhyme royal*, *terza rima*, and *Spenserian stanza*.

7.6 Figures of Speech

7.6.1 Symbol

In the broadest sense a symbol is anything which signifies something; in this sense all words are symbols. In discussing literature, however, the term "symbol" is applied only to a word or phrase that signifies an object or event which in its turn signifies something, or has a range of reference, beyond itself.

Some symbols are "conventional" or "public": thus "the Cross," "the Red, White, and Blue," and "the Good Shepherd" are terms that refer to symbolic objects of which the further significance is determinate within a particular culture. The conventional symbols are used in poetry along with the private or personal symbols created by the poets. Often they do so by exploiting widely shared associations between an object or event or action and a particular concept; for example, the general association of a peacock with pride and of an eagle with heroic endeavor, or the rising sun with birth and the setting sun with death, or climbing with effort or progress and descent with surrender or failure. Some poets, however, repeatedly use symbols whose significance they largely generate themselves, and these pose a more difficult problem in interpretation. Take as an example the word "rose," which in its literal use signifies a kind of flower. In Robert Burns' line "O my love's like a red, red rose," the word "rose" is used as a *simile*; and in the lines by Winthrop Mackworth Praed,

She was our queen, our rose, our star;
And then she danced—O Heaven, her dancing!

the word "rose" is used as a *metaphor*.

7.6.2 Hyperbole and Understatement

The figure of speech, or *trope*, called hyperbole (Greek for "overshooting") is bold overstatement, or the extravagant exaggeration of fact or of possibility.

"An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast;
But thirty thousand to the rest..."
Andrew Marvell, *To His Coy Mistress*

The contrary figure is **understatement** (the Greek term is *meiosis*, "lessening"), which deliberately represents something as very much less in magnitude or importance than it really is, or is ordinarily considered to be. The effect is usually ironic—savagely ironic in Jonathan Swift's *A Tale of a Tub*, "Last week I saw a woman flayed, and you will hardly believe how much it altered her person for the worse," and comically ironic in Mark Twain's comment that "The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated." Some critics extend "meiosis" to the use in literature of a simple, unemphatic statement to enhance the effect of a deeply pathetic or tragic event; an example is the line at the close of the narrative in Wordsworth's *Michael* (1800): "And never lifted up a single stone".

7.6.3 Metonymy

In **metonymy** (Greek for "a change of name") the literal term for one thing is applied to another with which it has become closely associated because of a recurrent relationship in common experience. Thus "the crown" or "the scepter" can be used to stand for a king and "Hollywood" for the film industry; "Milton" can signify the writings of Milton ("I have read all of Milton");

In **synecdoche** (Greek for "taking together"), a part of something is used to signify the whole, or (more rarely) the whole is used to signify a part. We use the term "ten *hands*" for ten workmen, or "a hundred *sails*" for ships and, in current slang, "wheels" to stand for an automobile. In a bold use of the figure, Milton describes the corrupt and greedy clergy in "Lycidas" as "blind *mouths*."

7.6.4 Personification

It is a figure related to metaphor, in which either an inanimate object or an abstract concept is spoken of as though it were endowed with life or with human attributes or feelings). Milton wrote in *Paradise Lost* (IX. 1002-3), as Adam bit into the fatal apple:

Sky lowered, and muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completing of the mortal sin.

The second stanza of Keats' "To Autumn" finely personifies the season, autumn, as a woman carrying on the rural chores of that time of year; and in *Aurora Leigh*, I. 251-2, Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote:

Then, land!—then, England! oh, the frosty cliffs
Looked cold upon me.

7.6.5 Onomatopoeia

Also **called** echoism, **is used both in a narrow and in a broad sense.**

(1) In the narrow and most common use, onomatopoeia designates a word, or a combination of words, whose sound seems to resemble closely the sound it denotes: "hiss,"

"buzz," "rattle," "bang." Two lines of Alfred, Lord Tennyson's "Come Down, O Maid" (1847) are often cited as a skilful instance of onomatopoeia:

The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees.

The American critic John Crowe Ransom has remarked that by making only two changes in the consonants of the last line, we lose the echoic effect because we change the meaning drastically: "And murdering of innumerable beeves."

(2) In the broad sense, "onomatopoeia" is applied to words or passages which seem to correspond to, or to strongly suggest, what they denote in any way whatever—in size, movement, tactile feel, or force, as well as sound

Alexander Pope recommends such extended verbal mimicry in his *Essay on Criticism* (1711) when he says that "the sound should seem an echo of the sense," and goes on to illustrate his maxim by mimicking two different kinds of action or motion by the metrical movement and by the difficulty or ease of utterance, in conjunction with the meanings, of the poetic lines that describe them:

When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,
The line too labors, and the words move slow;
Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,
Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and skims along the main.

7.6.6 Paradox

A paradox is a statement which seems on its face to be logically contradictory or absurd, yet turns out to be interpretable in a way that makes good sense. An instance is the conclusion to John Donne's sonnet "Death, BeNot Proud":

One short sleep past, we wake eternally
And death shall be no more; *Death, thou shalt die.*

The paradox is used occasionally by almost all poets, but was a persistent and central device in seventeenth-century *metaphysical poetry*, both in its religious and secular forms. Donne, who wrote a prose collection titled *Problems and Paradoxes*, exploited the figure in his poetry. "The Canonization," for example, is organized as an extended proof, full of local paradoxes, of the paradoxical thesis that sexual lovers are saints. Paradox is also a frequent component in verbal *wit*.

7.6.7 Oxymoron

If the paradoxical utterance conjoins two terms that in ordinary usage are contraries, it is called an oxymoron; an example is Alfred, Lord Tennyson's "O *Death in life*, the days that are no more." The oxymoron was a familiar type of *Petrarchan conceit* in Elizabethan love poetry, in phrases like "pleasing pains," "I burn and freeze/" "loving hate." It is also a frequent figure in devotional prose and religious poetry as a way of expressing the Christian mysteries, which transcend human sense and logic. So John Milton describes the appearance of God, in *Paradise Lost* (III, 380):

Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear.

Paradox was a prominent concern of many *New Critics*, who extended the term from its limited application to a type of *figurative language* so as to make it encompass all surprising deviations from, or qualifications of, common perceptions or commonplace opinions.

7.6.8 Simile & Epic Simile

In a **simile**, a comparison between two distinctly different things is explicitly indicated by the word "like" or "as." A simple example is Robert Burns, "O my love's like a red, red rose." The following simile from Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" also specifies the feature ("green") in which icebergs are similar to emerald:

And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald

Epic Similes are formal, sustained similes in which the secondary subject, or *vehicle*, is elaborated far beyond its specific points of close parallel to the primary subject, or *tenor*, to which it is compared (see under *figurative language*). This figure was imitated from Homer by Virgil, Milton, and other writers of literary *epics*, who employed it to enhance the ceremonial quality and wide-ranging reference of the narrative style. In the epic simile in *Paradise Lost* (I. 768 ff.), Milton describes his primary subject, the fallen angels thronging toward their new-built palace of Pandemonium, by an elaborate comparison to the swarming of bees:

As Bees
In spring time, when the Sun with Taurus rides,
Pour forth their populous youth about the Hive
In clusters; they among fresh dews and flowers
Fly to and fro, or on the smoothed Plank,
The suburb of their Straw-built Citadel,
New rubb'd with Balm, expatiate and confer
Their State affairs. So thick the aery crowd
Swarm'd and were strait'n'd; ..

7.6.9 Allegory

A representation of an abstract or spiritual meaning. Sometimes it can be a single word or phrase, such as the name of a character or place. Often, it is a symbolic narrative that has not only a literal meaning, but a larger one understood only after reading the entire story or poem.

The Pilgrim's Progress is a moral and religious allegory in a prose narrative; Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590-96) fuses moral, religious, historical, and political allegory in a verse *romance*. John Keats makes a subtle use of allegory throughout his ode "To Autumn" (1820).

An example—so brief that it presents an allegoric tableau rather than an action—is the passage in Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (1751):

Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

Self Assessment Exercise

1. Define Conceit and its types.
 2. Explain personification with the help of examples.
 3. What is simile and epic simile?
 4. Give a few examples of Allegory.
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7.7 Summary

In this unit we have dealt with some of the basic but important characteristics of the technical elements of poetry. Some of the terms covered in this unit were:

1. Terms and concept related to English prosody
 2. Different poetic devices
 3. Figures of speech and their purpose.
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7.8 Suggested Reading

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7.9. Terminal and Model Questions

1. Write short notes on the following:
 - Conceit
 - Imagery
 - Stanza
2. What is the importance of Figures of Speech in literature?

UNIT 8 FORMS OF POETRY

8.1 Introduction

8.2 Objectives

8.3 Narrative Poetry

8.3.1 Epic

8.3.2 Ballad

8.4 Lyric Poetry

8.4.1 Elegy

8.4.2 Ode

8.4.3 Sonnet

8.5 Dramatic Poetry

8.5.1 Dramatic Monologue

8.6 Stanza Forms

8.6.1 Blank Verse and Free verse

8.6.2 Couplet and heroic couplet

8.6.3 Terza rima

8.6.4 Rima royal

8.6.4 Spenserian Stanza

8.7 Summary

8.9 Suggested Reading

8.10. Terminal and Model Questions

8.1 Introduction

After reading the earlier unit you should have learnt about the different poetic devices. Now we will learn about the various forms and types of poetry. Poetry may be divided into three broad categories: narrative, lyric and dramatic. This classification is made from the point of view of subject matter, form and style.

8.2 Objectives

After reading this unit you will be able to:

- a. Define and understand the various types of poetry.
- b. Explain the characteristics of the different types of poems.
- c. Give examples of each type

8.3 Narrative Poetry

Narrative poetry is a form of poetry which tells a story, often making use of the voices of a narrator and characters as well; the entire story is usually written in metered verse. The poems that make up this genre may be short or long, and the story it relates to may be complex. The major forms that come under narrative poetry are the epic, ballad, idylls and lays.

8.3.1 Epic

In its strict sense the term epic or heroic poem is applied to a work that meets at least the following criteria: it is a long verse narrative on a serious subject, told in a formal and elevated style, and focuses on a heroic or god-like figure on whose actions depends the fate of a tribe, a nation, or (in the instance of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*) the human race.

There is a standard distinction between traditional and literary epics. Traditional epics (also called "folk epics" or "primary epics") were written versions of what had originally been oral poems about a tribal or national hero during a warlike age. Among these are the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* that the Greeks ascribed to Homer and the Anglo-Saxon *Beowulf*. "Literary epics" were composed by individual poetic craftsmen in deliberate imitation of the traditional form. The examples of this are Virgil's Latin poem the *Aeneid*, which later served as the chief model for Milton's literary epic *Paradise Lost* (1667). *Paradise Lost* in turn became, in the Romantic Period, a model for John Keats' fragmentary epic *Hyperion*, as well as for William Blake's several epics, or "prophetic books" (*The Four Zoas*, *Milton*, *Jerusalem*).

Literary epics are highly conventional compositions which usually share the following features:

1. The hero is a figure of great national or even cosmic importance. In the *Iliad* he is the Greek warrior Achilles, who is the son of the sea nymph Thetis; and Virgil's Aeneas is the son of the goddess Aphrodite. In *Paradise Lost*, Adam and Eve are the progenitors of the entire human race.
2. The setting of the poem is ample in scale, and may be worldwide, or even larger. The scope of *Paradise Lost* is the entire universe, for it takes place in heaven, on earth, in hell, and in the cosmic space between.

3. The action involves superhuman deeds in battle, such as Achilles' feats in the Trojan War. *Paradise Lost* includes the revolt in heaven by the rebel angels against God, the journey of Satan through chaos to discover the newly created world, and his desperately audacious attempt to outwit God by corrupting mankind.
4. In these great actions the gods and other supernatural beings take an interest or an active part—the Olympian gods in Homer, and Jehovah, Christ, and the angels in *Paradise Lost*.
5. An epic poem is a ceremonial performance, and is narrated in a ceremonial style which is deliberately distanced from ordinary speech and proportioned to the grandeur and formality of the heroic subject and architecture. Hence Milton's grand style—his formal diction and elaborate and stylized syntax, which are often modeled on Latin poetry, his sonorous lists of names and wide-ranging *allusions*, and his imitation of Homer's *epic similes* and *epithets*.

There are also widely used epic *conventions*, or formulas, in the choice and ordering of episodes in the heroic plot; prominent among them are these features, as exemplified in *Paradise Lost*:

1. The narrator begins by stating his argument, or epic theme, invokes a muse or guiding spirit to inspire him in his great undertaking, then addresses to the muse the epic question.
2. The narrative starts in *medias res* ("in the middle of things"), at a critical point in the action. *Paradise Lost* opens with the fallen angels in hell, gathering their scattered forces and determining on revenge.
3. There are catalogues of some of the principal characters, introduced in formal detail, as in Milton's description of the procession of fallen angels in Book I of *Paradise Lost*.

(M.H. Abrahams)

A mock epic or mock-heroic poem is distinguished as that type of parody which imitates, in a sustained way, both the elaborate form and the ceremonious style of the *epic* genre, but applies it to narrate at length a commonplace or trivial subject matter. In a masterpiece of this type, *The Rape of the Lock* (1714), Alexander Pope views through the grandiose epic perspective a quarrel between the belles and elegants of his day over the theft of a lady's curl. The story includes such elements of traditional epic protocol as supernatural *machinery*, a voyage on board ship, a visit to the underworld, and a heroically scaled battle between the sexes—although with metaphors, hatpins, and snuff for weapons.

8.3.2 Ballad

A short definition of the popular ballad (known also as the folk ballad or traditional ballad) is that it is a song, transmitted orally, which tells a story. Ballads are thus the narrative species of *folk songs*. In all probability 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. Typically, the popular ballad is dramatic, condensed, and impersonal: the narrator begins with the climactic episode, tells the story tersely by means of action and dialogue (sometimes by means of the dialogue alone), and tells it without self-reference or the expression of personal attitudes or feelings.

The literary ballad is a narrative poem written in deliberate imitation of the form, language, and spirit of the traditional ballad. In England, some of the best literary ballads were composed in the *Romantic Period*: examples are Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner", Walter Scott's "Proud Maisie," and Keats' "La Belle Dame sans Merci."

Check your Progress

1. What do you understand by epic?
2. Can ballad be considered as a folk song? Briefly explain.
3. What do you know about epic conventions?

8.4 Lyric Poetry

Lyric is a genre in poetry which expresses emotions and feelings. Earlier it meant a verse which was sung along with a lyre. Today it refers to a short poem usually but not always written in regular stanzas which express poet's feelings rather than events.

8.4.1 Elegy

In Greek and Roman literature, "elegy" denoted any poem written in elegiac meter (alternating *hexameter and pentameter* lines). 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. In Europe and England the word continued to have a variable application through the Renaissance. John Donne's elegies, written in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, are love poems, although they relate to the sense of elegy as lament, in that many of them emphasize mutability and loss. In the seventeenth century the term elegy began to be limited to its most common present usage: a formal and sustained lament in verse for the death of a particular person, usually ending in a consolation. Examples are the medieval poem *The Pearl* and Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess* (elegies in the mode of *dream allegory*); Alfred, Lord Tennyson's *In Memoriam* (1850), on the death of Arthur Hallam; and W. H. Auden's "In Memory of W. B. Yeats" (1940). Occasionally the term is used in its older and broader sense, for somber meditations on mortality such as Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (1757).

The dirge is also a versified expression of grief on the occasion of a particular person's death, but differs from the elegy in that it is short, is less formal, and is usually represented as a text to be sung; examples are Shakespeare's "Full Fathom Five Thy Father Lies" and William Collins' "A Song from Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*" (1749).

8.4.2 Ode

A long lyric poem that is serious in subject and treatment, elevated in style, and elaborate in its stanzaic structure. "Ode" comes from the Greek *aeidein*, meaning to sing or chant, and belongs to the long and varied tradition of lyric poetry. Originally accompanied by music and dance, and later reserved by the Romantic poets to convey their strongest sentiments, the ode can be generalized as a formal address to an event, a person, or a thing not present.

There are three typical types of odes: the Pindaric, Horatian, and Irregular. The Pindaric is named for the ancient Greek poet Pindar, who is credited with inventing the ode. Pindaric odes were performed with a chorus and dancers, and often composed to celebrate athletic victories. They contain a formal opening, or *strophe*, of complex metrical structure, followed by an *antistrophe*, which mirrors the opening, and an *epode*, the final closing section of a different length and composed with a different metrical structure. The William Wordsworth poem "Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood" is a very good example of an English language Pindaric ode. It begins:

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight

To me did seem
 Apparelled in celestial light,
 The glory and the freshness of a dream.
 It is not now as it hath been of yore;--
 Turn wheresoe'er I may,
 By night or day,
 The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

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. Dryden's "Alexander's Feast", Gray's "Hymn to Adversity", Coleridge's "Dejection: An Ode," Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" are all examples of the Pindaric form.

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.

The Horatian ode, named for the Roman poet Horace, is generally more tranquil and contemplative than the Pindaric ode. Less formal, less ceremonious, and better suited to quiet reading than theatrical production, the Horatian ode typically uses a regular, recurrent stanza pattern. Marvell's "An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland" and Keats' ode "To Autumn" are excellent examples of the horatian form.

8.4.3 Sonnet

A *lyric* poem consists 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.

The Italian or Petrarchan sonnet (named after the fourteenth century Italian poet Petrarch) falls into two main parts: an octave (eight lines) rhyming *abba abba* followed by a sestet (six lines) rhyming *cde cde* or some variant, such as *cdcc*. The first known sonnets in English, written by Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, used this Italian scheme, as did sonnets by later English poets including John Milton, Thomas Gray, William Wordsworth and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Milton's 'On his Blindness' is an example of Italian sonnet.

This form in English was further popularized by writers such as William Shakespeare, Edmund Spenser, Michael Drayton, Samuel Daniel and many others. The form is often named after Shakespeare, not because he was the first to write in this form but because he became its most famous practitioner. The form consists of fourteen lines structured as three quatrains and a couplet. The third quatrain generally introduces an unexpected sharp thematic or imagistic "turn"; the volta. In Shakespeare's sonnets, however, the volta usually comes in the couplet, and usually summarizes the theme of the poem or introduces a fresh new look at the theme. The rhyme scheme in English sonnets is *abab cdcd efef gg*.

A variant on the English form is the Spenserian sonnet, named after Edmund Spenser in which the rhyme scheme is *abab, bcbc, cdcd, ee*.

Limerick is a light or humorous form of five chiefly anapestic verses of which lines one, two and five are of three feet and lines three and four are of two feet, with a rhyme scheme of *aabba*. Named for a town in Ireland of that name, the limerick was popularized by Edward Lear in his *Book of Nonsense* published in 1846, and is generally considered the only fixed form of English origin.

Self assessment exercise

1. What is lyric poetry?
 2. Give the difference between an Elegy and Dirge. Give examples.
 3. Write a note on sonnet.
 4. What is the rhyme scheme of a limerick?
 5. Why is Pindaric ode is called so?
-

8.5 Dramatic Poetry

Dramatic poetry is basically drama written in verse to be spoken or sung, and appears in varying, sometimes related forms in many cultures. The English Renaissance saw the height of dramatic verse in the English-speaking world, with playwrights such as Ben Jonson, Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare developing new techniques, both for dramatic structure and poetic form. Dramatic poetry is any poetry that uses the discourse of the characters involved to tell a story or portray a situation. The major types of dramatic poetry are to be found in plays written for the theatre. There are further dramatic verse forms: these include dramatic monologues, such as those written by Robert Browning and Alfred Tennyson.

8.5.1 Dramatic Monologue

Dramatic Monologue is a type of lyric poem which was perfected by Robert Browning. According to Abrahams following are the features of dramatic monologue:

- a. 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: the Duke is negotiating with an emissary for a second wife; the Bishop lies dying; Andrea once more attempts wistfully to believe his wife's lies.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.

E.g. Browning's 'My Last Duchess', 'The Bishop Orders His Tomb' and 'Andrea del Sarto'. Tennyson's 'Ulysses' is also a dramatic monologue.

8.6 Stanza Forms

Now that we have discussed about some conventional poetic forms let us now move towards understanding the structure of poetry. To achieve desired poetic effects different kind of stanza patterns are used.

8.6.1 Blank Verse and Free Verse

Blank verse is called so because it consists of unrhymed lines in same meter, usually iambic- pentameter. It is considered as the most dominant form used in English poetry. It was developed in Italy and became widely popular during renaissance as it resembled classical, unrhymed poetry. The first known use of blank-verse in English is Earl of Surrey's translation of Virgil's Aeneid. Christopher Marlowe made full use of this style and established the blank verse as a dominant form for English drama. His 'mighty line' representing blank verse made blank verse the standard form of writing. Milton's Paradise Lost and a majority of content in Shakespeare's plays has been written in the blank verse. Though modernism openly rebelled and

experimented with the earlier tradition, blank verse was skillfully used by Yeats, Pound and Frost. Most of Robert Frost's narrative and conversational poems are in blank verse; so are other important poems like Wallace Stevens's "The Idea of Order at Key West" and "The Comedian as the Letter C", W. B. Yeats's "The Second Coming", W. H. Auden's "The Watershed".

Free Verse is also known as "open form" verse, French vers libre. It differs from traditional verse by the fact that its rhythmic pattern is not organized into a regular metrical form—that is, into feet, or recurrent units of weak- and strong-stressed syllables. Rhyme may or may not be present in free verse, but when it is, it is used with great freedom. The Psalms and The Song of Solomon are noted examples of free verse. Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* is an excellent example. The following lines are typical:

All truths wait in all things
They neither hasten their own delivery nor resist it,
They do not need the obstetric forceps of the surgeon.

Matthew Arnold sometimes used free verse, notably in "Dover Beach." But it was the French poets of the late nineteenth century --Rimbaud, Laforgue, Vielé-Griffin, and others--who, in their revolt against the tyranny of strict French versification, established the Vers libre movement, from which the name free verse comes. The representative poets of free verse in twentieth century are Rilke, St.-John Perse, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Carl Sandburg, and William Carlos Williams.

8.6.2 Couplet and Heroic Couplet

A couplet is a pair of lines of meter in poetry. It usually consists of two lines that rhyme and have the same meter.

Heroic couplet are lines written in iambic pentameter which rhyme in pairs: aa, bb,cc and so on. The term heroic was a development of later seventeenth century because of the use of this form in heroic poems and heroic dramas. Couplet was introduced into English literature by Chaucer in *The Legend of Good Women* and the famous *The Canterbury Tales*. John Dryden and Alexander Pope are well known for using heroic-couplet. John Denham's *Cooper's Hill* is an early example of the use of couplet:

O could I flow like thee, and make thy stream
My great example, as it is my theme!
Though deep, yet clear; though gentle, yet not dull;
Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full.

Alexander Pope is another proponent of heroic couplet:

See how the world its veterans rewards!
A youth of frolics, an old age of cards;
Fair to no purpose, artful to no end,
Young without lovers, old without a friend;
A fop their passion, but their prize a sot;
Alive, ridiculous, and dead, forgot!

(Of the Characters of Women)

8.6.3 Terza Rima

Terza Rima is composed of tercets (a stanza of three lines) which are interlinked with a rhyme scheme of *aba*, *bcb*, *cdc* and so on. Dante's *Divine Comedy* is in Terza Rima

8.6.4 Rima royal

Rima royal was introduced by Chaucer in *Troilus and Criseyde*. It is said that it takes its name from its use by 'the Scottish Chaucerian'. King James I of Scotland in his poem *The Kingis Quair*. It is a seven line iambic pentameter stanza with the rhyme scheme ababbcc. Shakespeare's and other Elizabethan poets widely used this form.

8.6.5 Spenserian Stanza

It is a longer form of stanza devised by Edmund Spenser for the *Faerie Queene* which has nine lines, in which the first eight lines are iambic pentameter and the last iambic hexameter rhyming ababbcbcc.

Self assessment Exercise

1. Name the different types of stanza forms you have learnt.
2. What do you understand by rhyme?
3. Give some examples of blank verse poetry.

8.7 Summary

In this unit we discussed some major forms and stanza patterns of poetry. Now you will be able to discuss and define forms employed by writers in their poems. You will also be able to understand and differentiate between various forms of poetry.

8.9 Suggested Reading

Abrams, M.H.(ed) *Norton Anthology*, London, UK.: W.W. Norton and Company. Print.

Cuddon, J.A. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, London, UK.: Penguin.1976.Print

Scholes, Robert.(ed.). *Elements of Literature*, New Delhi: Oxford University press.2010

www.poeticdevices.org

8.10. Terminal and Model Questions

1. What are the chief characteristics of Dramatic Monologue?
2. Write short notes on the following:
 - Ode
 - Sonnet

UNIT 9 INTRODUCTION TO DRAMA

9.1 Introduction

9.2 Objectives

9.3 Types of drama

9.4 Tragedy

9.5 Comedy

9.5.1 Comedy of humour

9.6 Tragi-Comedy

9.7 Forms of Drama

9.7.1 Closet Drama

9.7.2 History play

9.7.3 Masque

9.7.4 Melodrama

9.7.5 Miracle and Morality play

9.7.6 Problem play

9.8 Summary

9.9 Suggested Reading

9.10. Terminal and Model Questions

9.1 Introduction

Drama is that genre in literature which is basically related to performance. The term is derived from the Greek word which means 'action', which is derived from the word 'drao' meaning 'to act' or 'to do'. Since the dramatic texts are written to be performed, the structure of the text is highly influenced by the factors of production and presentation. The present unit will introduce you to the major types of drama.

9.2 Objectives

By the end of the unit, you will be able to

- Name and define different types of drama
 - Identify the characteristics involved with each type
 - Know the plays that fall into these categories
-

9.3 Types

Drama can be divided into three major types:

- Tragedy
- Comedy
- Tragi-comedy

Though there are other sub-categories associated which we will discuss along with the above mentioned categories.

9.4 Tragedy

In drama tragedy refers to representation of serious action and endeavors which end on a tragic note for the protagonist. Let's start with Aristotle's definition of tragedy in his Poetics. Aristotle defined tragedy as "the imitation of an action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself," involving "incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish the catharsis of such emotions." The basic difference which Aristotle draws between tragedy and other forms is, the 'tragic pleasure of pity and fear', which the audience experiences. He believes that the representation of suffering and defeat leave the audience not depressed but exalted or relieved, which he terms as catharsis. He further suggests that the tragic effect would be better if the hero is a mixture of good and bad and is in some way, 'better than we are', i.e. he belongs to higher moral worth. The disaster is the result of a mistaken action or an error in judgement (hamartia or tragic flaw). Often the tragic flaw is 'hubris', the excessive pride and self-confidence, which causes the hero to ignore a divine warning.

The medieval tragedies deviate from Aristotelian norms and are just narratives of the downfall of the hero who belongs to a high status. This downfall is due to an unpredictable turn of the wheel of fortune.

A distinct form of English tragedy develops during the Elizabeth era. The readings of Aristotle and roman playwright Seneca had major influence on the writings of this age. Though tragedies like Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton's *Gorboduc* (1562) follow the principle of three unities, many major tragedies written during this period by Marlowe, Shakespeare, George Chapman, Webster, Sir Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, and Philip Massinger, deviates radically from the Aristotelian norm. Thomas kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*(1586), Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*(1592), Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, and Shakespeare's one of

the greatest tragedies *Hamlet* are a few examples. Shakespeare's *Othello* is one of the few plays which accords closely with Aristotle's basic concepts of the tragic hero and plot.

The eighteenth century shows new trend in writing of tragedies. They are now written in prose and the protagonist belongs to a middle or ordinary rank who meets a social or domestic disaster. George Lillo's *The London Merchant: or, The History of George Barnwell* (1731) is an early example.

9.5 Comedy

Comedy is a work in which the primary objective is to amuse. There are no serious disasters and the things turn out to be good at the end. M.H. Abrahams categorizes five kinds of comedy:

- a. Romantic comedy: Such comedy was developed during Elizabethan period and represents a love affair that involves a heroine (sometimes disguised as a man); the course of this love does not run smooth, yet overcomes all difficulties to end in a happy union, for e.g. Shakespeare's *As You like It*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
- b. Satiric comedy: Satiric comedy is a ridicule of political beliefs or doctrines or is an attack through ridicule of those who deviate from accepted social morals or norms. An early example of satiric comedy is the Greek Aristophanes, whose works were a ridicule of political, philosophical and literary matters of his age. Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist* is another example of satiric comedy.
- c. Comedy of Manners: The comedy of manners originated in the New Comedy of the Greek Meander and was further developed in the 2nd and 3rd century by roman dramatists Platus and Terence. In English, the comedy of manners was brilliantly used by Shakespeare in plays like *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Much Ado about Nothing*. It was further refined during the Restoration period. It usually dealt with the sophisticated and superficial life and manners of the upper-class men and women, the comic effect achieved through witty conversational give and take(repartee). William Congreve's *The Way of the World* and William Wycherley's *The Country Wife* are good examples. Modern examples are Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* and Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*.
- d. Farce: The objective of farce is to provide simple laughter to the audience, also known as 'belly-laughs'. To achieve this highly exaggerated characters are put through ludicrous situations and sexual mix-ups, broad verbal humour, and physical bustle and horseplay is freely used. Shakespeare used farce as episodes in his complex comedies – like some scenes in *Taming of the Shrew*. Movies by comedians like Charlie Chaplin are excellent examples of farce.
- e. High comedy/Low comedy: High comedy evokes 'intellectual laughter' from the audience at the display of artificiality and pretentiousness of human life in exalted language. Where as low comedy makes no appeal to the intellect, rather it provokes laughter through simple jokes and plain humour. E.g. Shakespeare's *Much Ado about Nothing* and William Congreve's *The Way of the World*.

9.5.1 Comedy of Humour

This type of comedy was developed by the Elizabethan playwright Ben Jonson based on the ancient theory of four humours. According to Wikipedia, “The comedy of humours refers to a genre of dramatic comedy that focuses on a character or range of characters, each of whom has one overriding trait or 'humour' that dominates their personality, desires and conduct.” Jonson expounds this theory in ‘The Induction’ of his play *Every Man Out of His Humour*:

Some one peculiar quality
Doth so possess a man, that it doth draw
All his affects, his spirits, and his powers,
In their confluxions, all to run one way.

9.6 Tragicomedy

Tragicomedy is that which blends both tragic and comic forms. This type of drama reveals a serious action, which can destroy the hero of the play, but which by a sudden turn of circumstances ends in the favour of the same character. Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice* in which Antonio is almost bankrupt and has to give ‘a pound of flesh’ to Shylock for a debt, but is rescued by the sudden news that his business has been restored.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. What is drama?
 2. Name the three major types of drama. Identify three texts of each type.
 3. What do you understand by romantic comedy?
 4. Define Tragicomedy.
-

9.7 Forms of Drama

Now that you have learnt about the major categories of drama, let us learn about the different forms. As you know a drama is meant to be performed; actors utter the written dialogues and perform the actions on stage. But there are different forms of drama depending on the theme they are dealing with. Let us now go through some forms of drama.

9.7.1 Closet drama

M.H. Abrahams defines closet drama as, “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* (1671), Byron’s *Manfred* (1817), Shelley’s *Prometheus Unbound* (1820), and Hardy’s *The Dynasts* (1904-8)”.

9.7.2 History Play

History, although it developed very late than other genres, is a very important genre in drama. As the name suggests a history play deals with a historical narrative and is considered a subset of tragedy. The term also refers to chronicle plays which were works based on the historical materials in the English Chronicles. History plays cover a broad realm, including any drama based on historical materials. The best known examples of history plays are those written by Shakespeare e.g. *Richard II*, *Henry IV*, *Julius Caesar* etc. Christopher Marlowe’s *Edward II* is another example which was influential in the development of historical plays.

9.7.3 Masque

The masque flourished as a form of performance during the reigns of Elizabeth I, James I and Charles I though it originated earlier in Italy. It was a form of court entertainment with elaborate stage settings often designed by renowned designers and architects. The themes were mainly mythological and allegorical and the characters wore masks, hence the name masque. The characters were also played by members of the courtly society. The examples are *The Masque of Blacknesse* and *The Masque of Queens*. Robert Frost's two dramas *A Masque of Reason* and *A Masque of Mercy* are other examples.

Ben Jonson developed the antimasque which served as a countertype to the elegance, order and pomp of the masque form.

9.7.4 Melodrama

'Melos' is Greek word for song. Melodrama refers to a dramatic work which uses music to exaggerate plot and characters to achieve emotional effects. The Victorian melodrama usually has a hero, a heroine and a villain. The modern television dramas and the movies are developments of old form of the melodrama.

The first English play to be called a melodrama or 'melodrame' was *A Tale of Mystery* (1802) by Thomas Holcroft. Other examples are *Under the Gaslight*, William Dimond's *The Broken Sword*.

9.7.5 Miracle plays and morality plays

The miracle play deals with the story of Bible or the life story of some saint's life. Miracle and mystery plays though used interchangeably are sometimes distinguished as two different forms i.e. 'miracle plays' only deal with saint's lives and 'mystery plays' deal with plays based on the Bible. Earliest morality plays were brief parts of Latin liturgical texts called toques. The *Quem quaeritis* is the best known early form of this type. Gradually these plays evolved into complete plays.

The mystery play developed, in some places, into a series of plays dealing with all the major events in the Christian calendar, from the Creation to the Day of Judgment. By the end of the 15th century, the practice of acting these plays in cycles on festival days was established in several parts of Europe. Sometimes, each play was performed on a decorated cart called a *pageant* that moved about the city to allow different crowds to watch each play. The entire cycle could take upto twenty hours to perform and could be spread over a number of days. Taken as a whole, these are referred to as *Corpus Christi cycles*. (Wikipedia)

Morality plays developed during the medieval period and were allegories of a representative Christian life. Morality plays usually contain a protagonist who becomes a representative of whole humanity or society. The other characters are personifications of good and evil. The best known morality play is the fifteenth century *Everyman*.

9.7.6 Problem play

The problem play developed in the 19th century as part of the realistic movement. In the problem plays the situation faced by the protagonist is representative of some contemporary social problem. The driving force behind the play is the exploration of some social problem, like alcoholism or prostitution; the characters are used as examples of the general problem. The tragedy frequently springs from the individual's conflict with the laws, values, traditions, and representatives of society

The earliest form of problem plays was written by French writers like Alexander Dumas who dealt with the issue of prostitution in *The Lady of Camellias*. The major exponent of this form

was Norwegian playwright Henry Ibsen. Ibsen discussed a range of problems like the exploitation and denigration of middle class women by society and in marriage in *A Doll's House*, sexually transmitted diseases in *Ghosts* and provincial greed in *An Enemy of the People*.

Arthur Miller's *The Death of a Salesman* (1949), relies for its tragic seriousness on the degree to which Willy Loman, in his bewildered defeat by life, is representative of the ordinary man whose aspirations reflect the false values of a commercial society

A subtype of the modern problem play is the discussion play in which the social issue is expounded so as to generate a debate among the characters. Shaw's *Getting Married* is an example.

The critic F.S.Boas applied the term problem play to some of Shakespeare's bitter comedies like *Measure for Measure*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Merchant of Venice*.

Self Assessment Exercise

1. Differentiate between miracle and morality play.
2. What do you understand by problem play?
3. What is a Masque? Give examples.
4. Name some of the renowned history plays.

9.8 Summary

The main points discussed in this unit are:

- i. Understanding drama as a genre of literature.
- ii. The major types of drama
- iii. Various sub-genres of drama
- iv. Various forms of plays and their characteristics

9.9 Suggested Reading

Abrams, M.H.(ed) *Norton Anthology*, London, UK.: W.W. Norton and Company. Print.

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Scholes, Robert.(ed.). *Elements of Literature*, New Delhi: Oxford University press.2010

9.10. Terminal and Model Questions

1. What is Drama? Shed light on the various forms of Drama.
2. Write short notes on:
 - Tragi-comedy
 - Comedy of Humour

UNIT 10 **ELEMENTS OF DRAMA**

10.1 Introduction

10.2 Objectives

10.3 Elements of Drama

10.4 Anagnorisis

10.5 Catharsis

 10.5.1. Comic Relief

10.6 Dramatic Structure

10.7 Plot

 10.7.1 Elements of Plot

 10.7.1.1 Exposition

 10.7.1.2 The Rising Action

 10.7.1.3 Climax

 10.7.1.4 Falling Action

 10.7.1.5 Resolution

10.8 Act and Scene

10.9 Soliloquy

10.10 Summary

10.11 Suggested Reading

10.12 Terminal and Model Questions

10.1 Introduction

In the earlier unit you learned about the major forms and types of drama. Now that you have known different types of drama let us move towards knowing the elements employed and the basic terms related to the genre of Drama.

10.2 Objectives

After reading this unit you will be able to:

1. Understand the complex nature of drama
2. The major components of drama
3. Other features and terms related to drama

10.3 Elements of Drama

As you know that drama is meant to be performed, there are certain devices and techniques which help to make the emotions expressible on the stage. As you have learnt in earlier unit several of the terms and concepts in drama were defined by Aristotle. Let us get acquainted with these terms and concepts.

10.4 Anagnorisis

Anagnorisis which in Greek means recognition is that event in a play where a character makes a critical discovery about him or any other character. As the Greek meaning suggests it can also be a sudden realization of events and situations.

Aristotle defined anagnorisis as "a change from ignorance to knowledge, producing love or hate between the persons destined by the poet for good or bad fortune" (Wikipedia).

Aristotle was the first to discuss anagnorisis which then led to peripeteia.

Cesario's revelation at the end of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* that he is Viola; Iago's treachery towards Othello are examples of anagnorisis.

Peripeteia is the reversal of fortune or circumstances. Aristotle says "The finest form of Discovery is one attended by Peripeteia, like that which goes with the Discovery in Oedipus..."

10.5 Catharsis

Catharsis in Greek signifies "purgation" or "purification". Aristotle describes this term in his *Poetics* in relation to emotions. It refers to an emotional experience which through the characters facing a tragedy, is transferred to the audience. Aristotle presented that many tragic representations leave the audience feeling not depressed, but relieved and sometimes even exalted. Aristotle calls this effect "the pleasure of pity and fear". The critic F.L. Lucas maintains, therefore, that *purification* and *cleansing* are not proper translations for *catharsis*; that it should rather be rendered as *purgation*. "It is the human soul that is purged of its excessive passions." The following line from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is an example of catharsis:

"Here's to my love! [Drinks.] O true apothecary! Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die. [Falls.]"

Romeo commits suicide thinking that Juliet is dead. This tragedy stirs the repressed emotions of the audience who feel associated with the vent in some way or other.

10.5.1 Comic Relief

Comic relief is the introduction of comic characters, speeches or scenes in a serious or tragic work (Abrahams). Comic relief acts as episodes of dialogue which help to alleviate tension in the tragedy. Some examples of such elements are: the drunken Porter scene in Macbeth; the grave-digger scene Hamlet V.

Self Assessment Questions

1. Define anagnorisis. Give some examples.
2. What do you understand by the term catharsis?
3. Define comic relief.

10.6 Dramatic structure

Dramatic structure is the plot structure of a dramatic work. Many scholars beginning with Aristotle have analysed dramatic structure. According to Aristotle a plot is required to have unity of action i.e. a proper beginning, middle and end. Aristotle claimed that all the parts are, “so closely connected that the transposal or withdrawal of any one of them would dislocate the whole.”

10.7 Plot

Aristotle in his Poetics considers plot (mythos) as the most important part of a narrative. The plot is composed of events and actions and their ordering to produce desired artistic and emotional effects. This is highly dependent on the character because it is the character who with his verbal and physical actions imparts the idea on the stage. As Henry James says: “What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character?”(cited in Abrahams).

But it should be noted that plot is not story. In simple words, story is ‘*what happens*’ and plot is ‘*how it happens*’.

The form of plot depends on the nature of the work i.e. the design of the plot is such as to achieve the desired tragic, comic or romantic effect. Let us now go through some basic components of the plot.

The chief character of the plot around which the story revolves is called the protagonist (hero or heroine) and if there is an opponent of the main character he is called the antagonist. For example Hamlet is the protagonist and king Claudius antagonist in Shakespeare’s Hamlet. In tragedies the relation between the protagonist and antagonist is of conflict. The conflict may also be against fate.

The character who by sharp contrast serves to highlight the traits of the protagonist’s character is called a *foil*. Laertes in Hamlet and Hotspur in Henry IV serve as foil.

An intrigue, as the term suggests, is a character who initiates a conspiracy or a plan against some character and its success depends on the ignorance of the character. Iago in Othello is an intrigue.

A plot also holds within it the element of suspense and surprise. A lack of certainty on the part of reader/audience about what is going to happen is suspense. And if the result is against what was expected out of the events it is called surprise.

Aristotle suggests the need for three unities in a plot i.e. the incidents are properly connected in an ordered sequence:

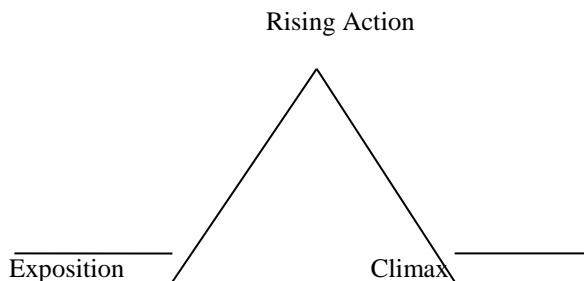
1. The *unity of action*: a play should have one main action that it follows, with no or few subplots.
2. The *unity of place*: a play should cover a single physical space and should not attempt to compress geography, nor should the stage represent more than one place.
3. The *unity of time*: the action in a play should take place over no more than 24 hours.

(Wikipedia)

Though during the Elizabethan period there was no following of these three unities. The historical plays of Shakespeare cover a period of several years. The most essential unity which existed is the unity of action. A later development in drama during the Elizabethan period was the introduction of a double plot. In this form a subplot is skilfully introduced into the play which serves to broaden the perspective on the main plot and enhance the effect of the story.

10.7.1 Elements of plot

The German critic Gustav Freytag divides plot into five acts or parts which is also known as Freytag's Pyramid.



10.7.1.1 Exposition

The exposition provides the basic information needed to understand the plot such as the characters of the protagonist, antagonist and the basic conflict. The exposition ends in an inciting moment which further leads the story to the rising action.

10.7.1.2 The Rising Action

In the rising action the basic internal conflict is complicated by the introduction of secondary conflicts which resist the protagonist from reaching his goal. The rising action presents the twists and turns which leads to the climax of the story.

10.7.1.2 Climax

The climax is the highest point of tension in a drama. The climax is the point where there is a turning point in the situations of the protagonist. The climax is that point which turns the rising action into falling action. If the plot is comic the things will change from bad to good; and if it is a tragedy then the things will get worse for the protagonist.

In the anti-climax the serious idea and tension elevated by the rising action is suddenly turned into something less significant or the problem posed is solved with a trivial effort. The resulting effect is comic as it is intended by the author. A good example of the use of anticlimax is Henry Ibsen's *A Doll's House* when at the end Nora announces to her husband that she is going to leave him and their children to make a life of her own.

10.7.1.3 Falling action

Falling action comes after the climax. During the falling action the conflict between the protagonist and the antagonist is uncovered and leads to the winning or losing of the protagonist. For example in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* the scenes of the falling actions are largely controlled by the antagonist Claudius.

10.7.1.4 Resolution

The outcome or the conclusion of the story is called the resolution. Resolution is also known as catastrophe or denouement depending on the nature of the plot.

Catastrophe is the final moment in a play where conflicts are resolved. In tragedy catastrophe comes with the death of one or more characters. According to Abrahams, catastrophe is usually applied to tragedies only. You must have seen that catastrophe in most tragedies ends in death of character/s. For e.g. Shakespeare's *Othello* ends with the death of Othello and Desdemona.

Another term used for the final scene, applied to both comedy and tragedy is denouement. The play ends with success or failure of the protagonist, mysteries are solved and settled. In comedies this is usually the marriage of hero and heroine.

10.8 Act and Scene

An act is a major unit or division of drama. The Roman theatre was the first to divide plays into acts which was then imitated by Elizabethan dramatists. The traditional play was divided into five acts in the sequence explained by Gustav Freytag, as mentioned in the earlier section. Acts were often divided into scenes to maintain coherence in events.

Chekhov and Henry Ibsen divided their plays into four acts. The most common form for plays in the twentieth century has been three acts.

Arthur Miller's *A Memory of Two Mondays* and Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* are examples of one act plays.

10.9 Soliloquy

Soliloquy means to talk to oneself whether silently or aloud. In drama soliloquy is speech by a character, alone on the stage, where his or her thoughts are uttered aloud. It is way used to convey information about the characters motives and state of mind. The best example of soliloquy is Hamlet's "To be or not to be". The speech is meant for the audience and it is assumed that other characters are not aware of it. The use of soliloquies went out of fashion with the advent of realism in drama during the eighteenth and nineteenth century.

Aside is the related device used to express the thought and intention of a character to the audience.

Self Assessment questions

1. What do you know about the three unities as defined by Aristotle?
2. Write a note on the importance of plot.
3. Give some examples of One act plays.
4. Define Gustave's division of plot.

10.10 Summary

In this unit you have learnt:

1. About drama as a performative genre.
2. Elements and devices used by dramatists.
3. Different forms of plot.

10.11 Suggested Reading

Abrams, M.H.(ed) *Norton Anthology*, London, UK.: W.W. Norton and Company. Print.

Cuddon, J.A. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, London, UK.: Penguin.1976.Print.

10.12 Terminal and Model Questions

1. Write short notes on:
 - Anagnorisis
 - Catharsis
2. What is Soliloquy?

UNIT 11 **WHAT IS LITERATURE?**

11.1 Introduction

11.2 Objectives

11.3 What is Literature?

 11.3.1 Diegesis or Mimesis?

 11.3.2 Inspiration

 11.3.3 Imagination

 11.3.4 Archetype

11.4 The Original Bipolarity in Life and Literature

 11.4.1 Romantic-Classical

 11.4.1.1 The Cyclical Movement

 11.4.1.2 The Philosophy

 11.4.1.3 Characteristics

 11.4.2 Apollonian-Dionysian

 11.4.3 Subjective-Objective

11.5 Summing Up

11.6 Answers to Self-Assessment-Questions

11.7 References

11.8 Terminal and Model Questions

11.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous two Blocks you studied some important critical concepts and terms used in poetry and drama. But literature is a unified whole, and there are many such concepts that are equally valid to all the genres of literature. You can also call them the basic or fundamental concepts in literature.

The present Unit introduces you to some of these basic concepts. You need to learn what great critics since ancient times have thought about such questions as what is literature, what are the major tendencies in literature, how do we read it, what do we get from it, and many more.

You will notice that once you have given sufficient attention to these questions, your appreciation of literature increases manifold.

11.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, you will be able to:

Analyse the nature of literature

Identify the fundamentally different tendencies in literature

Point out the problems in the reading and appreciation of literature

Defend many of the charges put forward by non-literary readers

11.3 What is literature?

Perhaps a broader question would be: what is Art? When you see, for example, a massive Indian temple, or the gods housed therein, don't you feel like asking why they are built the way they are and in no other way? Is it because the god is really like that, or because this is how the artist imagines this particular god? Perhaps the temple is built like that because it conforms to the Indian idea of a temple.

11.3.1 Diegesis or Mimesis?

These are Greek words used by Plato and Aristotle to describe different kinds of poetry. Diegesis means 'narration' and mimesis is 'imitation'. Wikipedia offers a neat categorization of these terms:

Though they conceive of mimesis in quite different ways, its relation with diegesis is identical in Plato's and Aristotle's formulations; one represents, the other reports; one embodies, the other narrates; one transforms, the other indicates; one knows only a continuous present, the other looks back on a past.

In narrative poetry or fiction we often have a narrator who knows everything about everything. He knows the past, present and future, and knows equally what goes inside the head and heart of his characters as well as the nature and cause of outer circumstances that surround his men and women. Such a narrator is imbued with a supernatural omniscience. The narrative flows from the act of 'knowing'.

Mimesis generally refers to dramatic poetry, where the actions and words of imaginary or historical characters are enacted on the stage. The actors 'imitate' or copy the characters who are not actually alive or present there. For example, when Naseeruddin Shah plays the role of Ghalib, we know that he is not Ghalib, and Ghalib in all probability was very different from such a representation. Similarly, Shakespeare's Cleopatra is very different from the real Cleopatra.

If these terms only referred to two different ways of telling or representing a story, there would be no problem, and no scope for a debate. But Plato started a debate by calling all art mimetic. He posited at the source of creation a set of divine archetypes or Ideas in the divine Mind (from which derives the philosophical school of Idealism). He said the world created by Nature is merely a copy of those Ideas. The artist in turn merely creates a copy of the Nature's creation. The art therefore is a copy of a copy, and thus thrice removed from Reality. Consequently, it is trivial and has no inherent value.

Plotinus and his followers, known as Neoplatonists, defended the charge by saying "that the poetic imitation is the highest of all imitation because the poet seeks to imitate the divine archetype, whereas the artisan merely copies an already existing model" (Princeton Encyclopedia).

11.3.2 Inspiration

This leads us to the next question: how does a poet write? How does he come to know those divine archetypes? (Wait a while, we will discuss what is an archetype). According to Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics,

Socrates explains that both poets and rhapsodists must be moved by a divine power speaking through them. Elsewhere, Plato seems to say that there can be no genuine poetry except by inspiration. In later ages inspiration, or *furor poeticus*, was interpreted as the superhuman state during which the poet glimpsed the ultimate nature of things, the divine archetypes. Countless texts and traditions affirm the truth of this doctrine.

Blake, the great Romantic poet, is said to have remarked that all great poetry and all scriptures have been written by one person – the Holy Ghost. Back home, we often hear the remark, "it is Goddess Saraswati who speaks through so and so". It is in this tradition that Ghalib affirms the Transcendent to be the source of his poetry and that in his compositions are heard the footsteps of Divinity – *Aate hain ghaib se ye mazami khayal mein / Ghalib sareere khama nawaye suresh hai*.

Inspiration, in short, means a supernatural power descending into man and speaking through him. It is for this reason that all poets at the beginning of a work invoke Saraswati or the Muses.

11.3.3 Imagination

What is then Imagination? We quite often hear people say, 'this is the work of a poet's imagination'. Why is Tulsi's Ram different from Valmiki's?

The word imagination comes from the word 'image'. It is the faculty of human mind that creates or receives images. Most of us see things, or think, in terms of images or pictures. How are these images created? As we shall see, there are gradations of images. There is a mental image of objects created by sense perception; but there are also images occurring in the absence of any

object. This second category is often termed as fantasy, fictitious or hallucinatory. Suppose you are about to undertake a journey to Mumbai, and you have never travelled to a big city before. Depending on the state of your mind – whether you are nervous, fearful, apprehensive or simply excited by adventure – you start imagining all kinds of scenes and situations. We all are familiar with this kind of imagination and image-making. If you share all this with a friend, chances are that nobody will pay any attention to it.

But we all pay serious attention to poets and artists, and our seriousness is directly proportional to the greatness of the artist. What is the nature of artistic imagination and how is it different from common man's imagination?

Plato started a debate by first asserting that no one can form any image of divine 'ideas', and then on second thoughts conceding a distant possibility for the same:

... that to form images from "ideas" was indeed possible to the god, that an image of pure beauty while it could not be produced by any activity of the soul, might be passively received from above, or even "remembered" from the soul's earlier state.... At most the soul could passively receive an image reflecting an idea; it could not actively produce such an image. (Princeton Encyclopedia)

Reality – like its more familiar terms, love, truth and beauty – is essentially formless, but at the same time it can assume a myriad forms. Beauty takes the form of Taj Mahal or the formation of clouds as the sun sets in the sky. Love reveals itself in the face, eyes and gestures of the beloved. The labour of the artistic imagination is to create that perfect form for the Formless. Sometimes it succeeds but quite often the success is partial.

How is this image, this form of the formless, created? Plato suggests that the 'Idea' finds a reflection in the "rational" or "irrational" soul. Have you looked at your image reflected in a mirror or in still water and noticed how the medium – mirror or water – gives a particular quality to the image? So there are two things involved in the process of imagination: the thing that is reflected, and the medium in which it is reflected. Both are quite important in their own way.

In case of the artistic imagination the medium is the artist's mind (we can ignore calling it 'soul' and avoid debating whether it is rational or irrational, because not many people seem to know what is a soul). There is something unique to an artist's mind, some kind of individuality, but there is also a lot which he inherits from the place and times of his birth. The artist inherits a set of ideas, philosophy, beliefs, a system of knowledge, a language and culture; he also goes through a set of experiences in life that are unique to him; he also receives his own set of intuitive flashes of insight: all these together constitute the medium of his mind. It is in this medium that the divine or undivine Idea finds a reflection. It is for this reason that Tulsidas and Shakespeare, who were almost contemporaries, wrote and thought in such differing ways. Shakespeare created the images of Hamlet, Cleopatra, Prospero and Puck to tell what life was all about; Tulsidas created afresh the images of Ram, Laxman and Sita to say much the same thing.

But what is this Thing that all the artists aspire for and which gets reflected in the medium of their minds? The answer is simple: the highest Truth or Reality, the divine "Idea" or Archetype; or more simply, what is the meaning of our existence on this earth.

11.3.4 Archetype

The theory of archetypes came into vogue in the twentieth century with Jung's study of 'the collective unconscious' and Northrop Frye's detailed analysis of archetypes in literature. The concept, though, dates back to Plato's theory of 'Ideas'. The Greek word for the archetype means "original pattern". It is the prototype from which copies are made. Plato, for example, discusses the 'idea' of a table consisting of a flat surface supported by vertical props of which all tables are copies.

Archetype points to the essential and universal nature of a thing. Man, for example, is the same all over the world. The suffering, joy, anxiety, struggle, ambition, greed, love, kindness, generosity, search for meaning and purpose are same in all human beings, whether they be rich or poor, black or white, European or Asian. Motherhood is same in all Nature, be it human beings, animals or insects.

Plato proposed that creation is a copy of the archetypes in the divine Mind. Anthropological studies have revealed a host of commonalities in myth, ritual and religion across various cultures, thus lending substance to Plato's position.

Jung suggested that experience of generations is stored as residual memory in the collective unconscious, and it is this that drives our lives and gives it a direction. This memory is revealed in dreams and fantasies and is recorded in myths, ritual and art. According to Jung,

The primordial image or archetype is a figure, whether it be a daemon, man or process, that repeats itself in the course of history wherever creative phantasy is freely manifested. Essentially, therefore, it is mythological figure. If we subject these images to a closer examination, we discover them to be the formulated resultants of countless typical experiences of our ancestors. They are, as it were, the psychic residue of numberless experiences of the same type.

Northrop Frye, the chief exponent of myth criticism, posited these basic patterns as inherent in all Nature:

In the solar cycle of the day, the seasonal cycle of the year, and the organic cycle of human life, there is a single pattern of significance, out of which myth constructs a central narrative around a figure who is partly the sun, partly vegetative fertility and partly a god or archetypal human being.

Following Frye, critics have made an exhaustive study of archetypes as they are found in literature. J. A. Cuddon sums up the list:

The fundamental facts of human existence are archetypal: birth, growing up, love, family and tribal life, dying, death, not to mention the struggle between children and parents, and fraternal rivalry. Certain characters or personality types have become established as more or less archetypal. For instance: the rebel, the Don Juan (womanizer), the all-conquering hero, the braggadocio, the country bumpkin, the local lad who makes good, the self-made man, the hunted man, the siren, the witch and femme fatale, the villain, the traitor, the snob, the social climber, the guilt-ridden figure in search of expiation, the damsel in distress, and the person more sinned against than sinning. Creatures, also, have come to

be archetypal emblems. For example, the lion, the eagle, the snake, the hare and the tortoise. Further archetypes are the rose, the paradisaal garden and the state of 'pre-Fall' innocence. Themes include the arduous quest or search, the pursuit of vengeance, the overcoming of difficult tasks, the descent into the underworld, symbolic fertility rites and redemptive rituals. (A Dictionary of Literary Terms)

When you become aware of these archetypes as active agents in your own life and mind, the awareness can be quite liberating. You realise that there is nothing great or exceptional about your pain or pleasure, your success or failure, your God or religion. Man has been all through this for countless generations and has survived and gone beyond. You become humble, and grow in sensitivity, sympathy and love for all life.

EXERCISE 1

- (a) How far do you agree with the view that literature is a mirror of society?
 - (b) What is the meaning of Blake's remark that all great poetry and all scriptures have been written by one person – the Holy Ghost?
 - (c) What do you understand by imagination? What is the process by which an image takes shape in the artist's mind?
 - (d) List some of the major archetypes found in literature.
 - (e) Holy Ghost is
 - (a) A pure and great ghost
 - (b) The omnipresent Spirit of God
 - (c) Another name for Shiva
 - (d) None of the above
6. Archetypes exist
- (a) In the divine Mind
 - (b) In the Collective Unconscious
 - (c) In both the above
 - (d) (a) and (b) are two different theories

11.4 THE ORIGINAL BIPOLARITY IN LIFE AND LITERATURE

The Reality, to the Indian mind, is One without a Second – ekamevadwitiyam. But that is before and at the end of Creation. The creation begins when one becomes two and starts multiplying into many. Brahman divides into two and becomes Shiva and Shakti – God and Creatrix; Purusha and Prakriti – the subjective Self and objective Nature; Radha and Krishna – the eternal Feminine and Man, her lord and child.

This is the original bipolarity, the divine archetype, that is reflected in a million instances everywhere in life. Three such pairs, also known as dichotomies or antinomies, of critical concepts in literature – Romantic-Classical; Dionysian-Apollonian; Subjective-Objective – are of crucial importance.

11.4.1 Romantic - Classical

The complexity of romantic-classical dichotomy makes it perhaps one of the most baffling and rewarding of critical concepts. As early as 1948, F. L. Lucas in his *The Decline and Fall of the Romantic Ideal* had counted 11,396 definitions of romanticism. The debate goes on and the confusion multiplies. In the following pages, we will attempt to make matters simple for you, with one warning: the two tendencies are the ever-alive movements of Nature and can be fully known only at the experiential level. If you belong to one category, you will not understand the other, just like a man will never understand a woman. Shakespeare's Hamlet provides a telling example: Hamlet is a romantic and can never appreciate the moves and motives of others who are 'classicists' and appear to him, to say the least, neurotic; these others in turn find Hamlet 'mad'.

11.4.1.1 The Cyclical Movement

Some critics, like Strich, Cazamian and Sir Herbert Read, while exploring the history of ideas and literary psychology observed that the two movements of romanticism and classicism are cyclical in nature. When, for example, romanticism starts decaying, is in decline, classicism rises from the ashes of a bygone age. Once born, like the cycle of life, it grows to maturity and reaching old age declines and dies, thus making way for the rise of romanticism. The two tendencies oscillate and follow each other like day and night

As an illustration, take a look at the history of English literature. The fourteenth century sees the rise and maturing of classical tendency in the Age of Chaucer. In the fifteenth century classicism goes into decline. Beginning with Edmund Spenser and culminating in Shakespeare, romanticism attains its highest powers in the sixteenth century, the Elizabethan age. In the seventeenth century, classicism comes back with Milton, rises with Dryden and peaks in Pope in the early eighteenth century. At the same time as classicism becomes exaggerated and decadent in Pope and his followers, romanticism starts sending its first shoots in Gray and Collins. In the early nineteenth century, romanticism attains its second full flowering in what is known as the Romantic Revival. The Victorian period witnesses the decline of romanticism and the rising of classical tendency which reaches its peak in the twentieth century, the age of T. S. Eliot. It's too early to comment on post-Eliot period, but postmodernism, the hippy movement and Beat generation point to the exaggeration and decline of classical spirit and the romanticism's struggle to find its voice again.

11.4.1.2 The Philosophy

I am an Anglo-Catholic in religion, a classicist in literature and a royalist in politics.

—T. S. Eliot, *For Lancelot Andrews* (1928)

There are two approaches to life. One is the acceptance of Christian belief that man is born sinful, that he is the result and inheritor of the Original Sin which in turn is the cause of all his imperfections. For him the only way open to redemption is to submit to the discipline of Church. Only thus can he hope to find some measure of perfection. This approach is at the basis of classicism, where you submit to the dictates of tradition, to the rules laid down by 'classics'.

The other approach is well voiced by Jean Jacques Rousseau, who said, “Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains”. This viewpoint asserts that human soul is an integral part of Divine and hence perfect in essence and nature. The seeds of corruption are in society, in tradition. Therefore, only by breaking free from all bondage does man regain his original state of freedom, perfection and purity, the state before the Fall. This spirit of freedom is the clarion call of romanticism.

The spirit of obedience forms the foundation of classicism; the spirit of freedom is the hallmark of the heavens of romanticism. Can you define Premchand’s *Raghu* as a ‘classicist’ and Tagore’s *Tara* as a romantic?

11.4.1.3 Characteristics

We have seen how freedom and obedience are at the core of romantic-classical antinomy. Freedom is the quality of soul, of spirit; and obedience becomes recognisable only in demonstrable physical action. One belongs to the spirit, the other to the physical, material realm. Therefore, for the romantic Spirit is the primary reality, while to the classicists Matter is the primary, if not the only, reality. All things of the spirit – peace, wisdom, magnanimity, compassion, love, joy, imagination, dream, the unknown and the unknowable, death, darkness, gods, demons, ghosts, nymphs – are dear to the romantic. Name, fame, rank, reputation, success, reward, image, riches, power, lust – all that can be measured, quantified and possessed as a trophy is the goal of life’s pursuit for the classicist.

The traditionally upheld conventions of the heroic couplet, the classical diction, the actions of lords and ladies, the fashions of high society, and the virtue, vices and artefacts of human civilisation are central to the poetry of a neoclassicist like Alexander Pope.

Return to nature, freedom from all artificial conventions of theme and diction as well as all conventions of church and society, longing for a past that is outwardly invisible, imagination and myth-making, bringing into presence the supernatural including the ever-illusory experience of dying, mystical and platonic love are the defining characteristics of the nineteenth century romanticism. Cuddon lists the following as the features of romanticism:

1. An increasing interest in Nature, and in the natural, primitive and uncivilised way of life
2. A growing interest in scenery, especially its more untamed and disorderly manifestations
3. An association of human moods with the moods of Nature – and thus a subjective feeling for it and interpretation of it
4. A considerable emphasis on natural religion
5. Emphasis on the need for spontaneity in thought and action and in the expression of thought
6. Increasing importance attached to natural genius and the power of the imagination
7. A tendency to exalt the individual and his needs and emphasis on the need for a freer and more personal expression
8. The cult of the Noble Savage

No truth, no divine ‘idea’ is exclusive to a culture, though its expression may vary in different cultures. The romantic-classical dichotomy is conceived as an eternal mystical Fact and

symbolised in the twin godhead figures of Ram and Krishna in the Indian tradition. For the classicist Ram, the outer, the society, the dharma, the obedience to family and tradition are more important than any consideration of the subjective world of personal feelings. For the romantic Krishna the breaking of all bondages of tradition seems to be the only dharma: even as a child he steals and tells lies; he helps elope his sister; not only is he polygamous, his consort Radha is somebody else's wife – in every way just the opposite of what Ram is. So different, and yet the two are not different: they both are the incarnations of same Vishnu. At most, the two sides of the same coin, one should say.

11.4.2 Apollonian - Dionysian

Friedrich Nietzsche introduced these terms, derived from Greek gods Apollo and Dionysus, in his seminal work *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872). Apollo, associated with the sun, represents the masculine principle of order, distinction and discipline, and is closer to the spirit of classicism; Dionysus, the god of fertility and wine, stands for the feminine principle of irrational, instinct, ecstasy, dance and celebration, and is nearer to the romantic tendency.

As Nietzsche explains it, the Apollonian is a visual impulse, as is appropriate for the god of light. The visible, apparent and objective, the body and form lie in the domain of Apollo. As such, he is also the presiding deity of sculpture and architecture. As a god of clarity, Apollo reinforces distinctions, including that between self and other, hence he is the god of individuation as well. The Dionysian, on the other hand, is the collapse of individuation, a self-oblivion, a melting away of distinctions between self and other. It prepares the way for mystical participation, a return to the "heart of nature", to the unitive vision of Reality.

According to the Princeton Encyclopedia,

1. Nietzsche uses Apollo as a symbol for the poet's dream of form: the Apollonian impulse urges the poet to create an understandable and beautiful world. It further guides him to a cognition of symmetry, giving him the power to create an apparently real world within tragedy. By contrast, the Thracian god Dionysus is used by Nietzsche to characterise the poet's sense of music. Music, in this definition, is an expression of that basic awareness of blind irrationality, pain, and suffering in the world which gives rise to the Dionysian dance of orgiastic worship.

Instead of finding the two impulses contradictory, Nietzsche sees them as complimenting each other. Head and heart need to be integrated, not to be made eternal rivals for throne. Only by achieving a harmonious balance of the two, the Greek tragedy found the peak of its perfection. With the rise of Socrates and the rational principle the balance was lost and the Greek tragedy declined.

All art is born from a dynamic interaction of the two impulses, just as the attraction and repulsion between man and woman is the basis of all procreation. Neither is superior to the other, nor can it exist in isolation with total disregard of the other.

11.4.3 Subjective - Objective

Just as it destroyed the Apollonian-Dionysian balance of the Greek tragedy, the rational thought was once again responsible for creating an unnecessary schism between art and science. Beginning with Rene Descartes and the rise of science, the apostles of the Age of Reason upheld

the supremacy of physical and objective world as the only verifiable Fact. The subjective reality, the inner world of the artist, was relegated to the realm of fiction and fantasy.

It was Blake who made a heroic effort to restore the balance and sanity by asserting that God and Nature were not verifiable objects and could be known only as subjective experience. Only art, poetry and imagination had the power to reveal the highest truth through suggestive symbolism. Blake also refused to admit any distinction between the internal and the external, between the subjective and the objective. With the coming of Victorians, the breach between the subjective and the objective reality widened. While they retained the romantic sensibility of subjective feelings, their beliefs were borrowed from the votaries of the scientific camp.

The fight for supremacy between these two schools of thought has been going on – sometimes in skirmishes, at times in open war – since the days of Aristotle. The conflict reached a decisive position in what is known as the Victorian Crisis when religion seems to have lost the battle completely. You will notice that Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*, advocating a harmony between the two, is a product of the same period. The fight is unnatural and the conflict creates an anguish in the common mind as seen in many poems of Tennyson and Arnold.

Subject, as you must have noticed in your study of grammar, refers to the doer, one who performs the action; the object is on which this action is performed. The subject and object thus form the two poles of reality as it is experienced in everyday life. There is the experiencer, the observer, and there is that which is experienced or observed. The two have a complex relationship, and man has always struggled to define the exact nature of this relationship as well as the fundamental nature of reality. Because there are many ways of looking at it, in India arose a variety of schools of thought as the Vedantists took differing positions on the matter: Advaita, Dvaita, Vishishtadwat, Dwaitadwait....

Here we will look at the two major positions that have divided the European mind into conflicting camps. The subjectivist position is favoured by the creative artist for whom Imagination is the primary faculty. It is also supported by religious and mystical schools of thought. On the other hand, the rationalist school of philosophical thought and the scientific approaches to the study of life and matter tend to take a rigid objectivist position.

The subjectivists assert that there is no such thing as pure objectivity. Without the knower there can be no known. The object is what it appears to the subject. It is the subject who defines the object. But you may argue that a chair is the same to all viewers, that is, the physical world as perceived by our senses is the same to all human beings. True, but the range of human sense organs is not the same as that of other animals. Your sight, your hearing, your taste has a definite range, which is different from the range given by Nature to many other living creatures. Thus, different living creatures will see a chair very differently. Which one is the real chair? Perception, again, is not limited to physical sense organs. Indians talk of subtle senses. What about mind? Doesn't it come into play in the interpretation of data provided by the sense organs? Will a Rs 500 currency note found at the roadside appear the same to a cow, a child, a poor man, and a rich man? Is the range of subtle senses and mind the same in Buddha, Vivekananda, Einstein and you and me? If not, then how can the world appear the same to all human beings, not to talk of all living creatures and supernatural beings like ghosts, gods and goddesses? Do you believe in gods and ghosts? Have you seen one? There are many who say they have seen them. Do you think you and

the people like you who have never seen a ghost are the only one who are wise and others are hallucinating fools and cranks? The rationalists think so. There was a professor at Oxford, R. C. Zaehner, who said something similar about Yogananda's Autobiography of a Yogi.

The rationalists deny the value of subjective experience. They say it falsifies the truth. Only that which can be tested a thousand times and every time yields the same result is truth. The common denominator is the sole truth. But senses too falsify: the sun seems to go round the earth, but it is not so. In that case, we use mathematics and rigorous testing in sophisticated scientific labs. But the fundamental particle appears differently under differing observing conditions; and sometimes it doesn't appear at all, it just vanishes, and the scientists then term it a 'wave'. They have no clue as to the nature of the most fundamental component of material reality, and yet Matter is the only reality because it alone is verifiable by scientific methods. But the scientific researches in themselves are not objective. They are not guided by the objective search for truth, but are most often sponsored by State and money-making capitalists.

Their major charge against the subjectivists is that the self, which is an unstable product of culture, individual experiences and language, falsifies the truth by giving it an individualistic colour. True, but isn't there a subject, a knower who is greater and other than the self? That is dismissed because it is not verifiable. But it does not mean, Blake would argue, that that which is not scientifically verifiable does not exist.

The debate continues. The Vedas, the Upanishads are subjective experiences. The newest virus is a scientific fact which helps enrich the coffers of pharmaceutical giants. What is truth? Go and find for yourself. Did we say it's a subjective experience?

EXERCISE 2

1. Discuss the cyclical recurrence of romanticism and classicism in the history of English literature.
2. In what manner is Christianity related to the classical school of thought? Could this have contributed to the growing emphasis on rational thought in the western mind and therefore engineered its own downfall?
3. Discuss some of the major characteristics of romanticism
4. What do you understand by Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy?
5. In your opinion is the reality a subjective experience or an objective fact?
6. Discuss Ram and Krishna as classical and romantic poetic creations.

11.5 SUMMING UP

In this Unit we have learned

1. How to distinguish different artistic creations
2. How to identify the major and minor components of romantic-classical antinomy

3. How to relate the various antinomies to a single theme

4. How to dig deeper in the nature of reality

We looked at the nature of art and various related factors that go with it. Once you master the critical concepts like imagination and inspiration, you will be able to appreciate how a piece of art is produced. An understanding of the two major currents behind life and literature will give you an unbiased and richer experience of everyday life.

11.6 ANSWERS TO SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Exercise 1

1. Explain this viewpoint, then contrast it with what you have read about diegesis and mimesis.
2. Don't you think Blake is referring to Inspiration?
3. Refer to 12.3.3
4. Refer to 12.3.4
5. B
6. D

Exercise 2

1. Refer to 12.4.1.1
2. Refer to 12.4.1.2. You have to think and relate how Christianity is opposed to romanticism. If you read more about English romanticism, you will see why most romantics broke away from the church. Also try to figure out how all religious quest is romantic in nature. Think deeply. It's a challenging question and requires some serious thinking.
3. Refer to 12.4.1.3
4. Refer to 12.4.2
5. Refer to 12.4.3

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11.8 TERMINAL AND MODEL QUESTIONS

1. Discuss Plato's theories of diegesis and mimesis.
2. Critically examine the views of Plato and Jung on the nature of archetypes.
3. Attempt a critical analysis of the concept of romantic-classical dichotomy.
4. Critically examine the debate between subjectivism and objectivism.

UNIT 12 READING LITERATURE

12.1 Introduction

12.2 Objectives

12.3 Issues in Reading / Interpretation

 12.3.1 New Criticism

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12.4 Experience of Art

 12.4.1 The theory of Rasa

 12.4.2 Catharsis

 12.4.3 Pathos and Sentimentality

 12.4.4 Empathy and Sympathy

12.5 Summing Up

12.6 Answers to Self-Assessment-Questions

12.7 References

12.8 Terminal and Model Questions

12.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous Unit you studied some of the important critical concepts about the nature and fundamental bipolarity of literature. In short, you understood to take note of the basic position behind a text that you might be asked to analyse.

The present Unit takes you a step further. It makes you familiar with the more important concepts involved in reading and interpreting a literary text.

Once you have fully assimilated these concepts, you should be able to undertake a proper literary reading of a literary text.

12.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, you will be able to:

- Analyse the problems of interpretation
- Safeguard your reading from the common pitfalls
- Point out how the reading of text has developed into a critical movement

12.3 ISSUES IN READING / INTERPRETATION

At the beginning of the twentieth century, or the Modern Age, critics began to note that there was something sloppy about the way literature had been read and interpreted by earlier generations. It had been interpreted along biographical lines, paying a little too much attention to the author's personal life. This kind of interpretation suggested that characters, situations and emotions depicted in the poem or novel had their roots in the author's personal experiences. Similarly, a second approach, known as sociological criticism, propounded that behind the ideas, philosophy, and opinions of the author there was the sociological structure of his times. In either case, critics had looked for clues outside the text, and led the reader to get more interested in the historical, cultural and biographical background rather than in the text itself.

Beginning with T S Eliot, I A Richards, William Empson and culminating in New Critics, a new approach to interpretation, where text was of paramount importance, changed for ever the course of literary criticism. It taught us anew how to read literature. In this section, we will take a look at what was this New Criticism about, and then at some more important critical concepts associated with this movement.

12.3.1 New Criticism

The term came into vogue with the publication of John Crowe Ransom's *The New Criticism* in 1941. However in theory and practice it derived much from I A Richards' *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924) and *Practical Criticism* (1929), William Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930) and T S Eliot's critical essays. The other notable practitioners of New Criticism were Cleanth Brooks, Robert Penn Warren, Allen Tate, R. P. Blackmur, and William K. Wimsatt. As noted earlier, these critics were strongly revolting against the practices of biographical, historical and sociological criticism then prevalent in the teaching of literature. According to M H Abrams, New Criticism opposed the prevailing interest of scholars, critics, and teachers of that era in the biographies of authors, the social context of literature, and literary history by insisting that

the proper concern of literary criticism is not with the external circumstances or effects or historical position of a work, but with a detailed consideration of the work itself as an independent entity.

The focus now shifted to the text. Eliot said that a poem should be read “primarily as poetry and not another thing”, as history or sociology. John Crowe Ransom suggested that once a text is published it becomes autonomous and exists in its own right. Even the author has no control over how his book is going to be received or interpreted. Whatever intention the author may have had in writing his book or poem is now irrelevant. What matters alone is the meaning that the reader is going to find in the text. For this reason, the reader was asked to avoid anything that drew his attention away from the text, to eschew what came to be called intentional fallacy and affective fallacy.

Because it was made of language, the text became a ‘verbal icon’. But the language as used by a poet or literary artist is different from the one used by science, media or common man. Even Indian linguistics differentiates four levels of speech – para, pashyanti, madhyama and vaikhari: the first is used by gods, the second by poets, the third by scholars and the last one by others. Quite understandably, the language of literature needs to be treated with respect and seriousness.

In order to capture the multifaceted and yet elusive meaning of a literary text the New Critics resorted to the practice of close-reading in which each significant word was scrutinized to reveal every shade of ambiguity and all the multiple layers of meaning. Every pattern of verbal and semantic association, figures of speech, imagery and symbolism was put to a microscopic examination, much like a rigorous testing in a scientific lab. Further, the meaning of a word, a line, or an image and a symbol is read in the context of total structure of meanings. The text is seen as an organic whole, not something made of parts.

The new critics do not give much importance to specific elements that differentiate various genres. For them, the meaning does not so much reside in the plot, character and action, but in the word, in language which is common to all genres. Abrams explains:

The essential components of any work of literature, whether lyric, narrative, or dramatic, are conceived to be words, images, and symbols rather than character, thought, and plot. These linguistic elements, whatever the genre, are often said to be organized around a central and humanly significant theme, and to manifest high literary value to the degree that they manifest “tension,” “irony,” and “paradox” in achieving a “reconciliation of diverse impulses” or an “equilibrium of opposed forces.”

A very influential English critic from Cambridge, F. R. Leavis followed the method of close reading and detailed analysis of the text but refused to be bracketed with New Critics. He differed from his American counterparts, however, in his emphasis on the great literary works as a concrete and life-affirming enactment of moral and cultural values. From 1932 to 1953 Leavis edited *Scrutiny: A Quarterly Review*, which published critical contributions from Eliot, Empson and Richards, among others.

12.3.2 Ambiguity

The word was popularised as a critical concept by William Empson in his book *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930). The Oxford English Reference Dictionary (1995) defines the word as “double meaning, either deliberate or caused by inexactness”. Etymologically, it comes from the Latin word “ambiguus” meaning “doubtful”. Generally used in a pejorative sense it suggests withholding of exact information in order to mislead the hearer. Empson was quite aware of it, for he explained:

An ambiguity, in ordinary speech, means something very pronounced, and as a rule witty or deceitful. I propose to use the word in an extended sense, and shall think relevant to my subject any verbal nuance, however slight, which gives room for alternative reactions to the same piece of language.

That Empson’s usage has become established is shown by the very first definition given by Oxford Dictionary of English (Apple Version 2.2.3 (118.5)): “the quality of being open to more than one interpretation”.

Empson refers to a situation in which Shakespeare’s editors were strongly divided over the exact meaning of the word ‘rooky’ in *Macbeth*. From this he concludes that if collectively the editors were aware of multiple meanings, then the Elizabethan audience too must have known them and Shakespeare, who “was no less sensitive to words than they”, would be equally aware of them. Therefore, it is logical to believe that Shakespeare deliberately used the ambiguity for a definite creative purpose.

By using this method of reading multiple meanings, Empson is pushing his readers not to rest content with a single interpretation. Life is a mysterious affair, and mystery suggests an infinity of meanings, sometimes even contradictory meanings. Just like life, all great art is a mystery, open to multiple interpretations. Perhaps this is a precondition of greatness in art. That which is plain is not art at all.

Indians have always been aware of this infinity of meaning: says, Tulsi, “Jaakee rahee bhavana jaisi / prabhu-murati dekhi tin taisi”. It is bhavana, the psychic content of the reader that defines the meaning, not the object, the text per se. But that is another matter, for Tulsi’s position lies opposite to the objectivist approach of New Critics.

But to come back to Empson: he says there are seven types of ambiguity in which the meaning of a word may lie partially concealed. Cuddon summarises:

- (f) When a detail is effective in several ways simultaneously.
- (g) When two or more alternative meanings are resolved into one.
- (h) When two apparently unconnected meanings are given simultaneously.
- (i) When alternative meanings combine to make clear a complicated state of mind in the author.
- (j) A kind of confusion when a writer discovers his idea while actually writing. In other words, he has not apparently pre conceived the idea but come upon it during the act of creation.

-
- (k) Where something appears to contain a contradiction and the reader has to find interpretation.
- (l) A complete contradiction which shows that the author was unclear as to what he was saying.

Empson wrote his book when he was not yet 22 and published it when he was 24. Some critics have found faults with Empson's elaborate categorisation and called it "pretentious". But John Crow Ransom praises him as the critic of first order: "The ordinary critic cannot read them (Empson's analyses) and be the same critic again...." Frank Kermode and Harold Bloom also acknowledge the greatness of Empson as a critic.

12.3.3 The Two Fallacies

You have seen how New Criticism reacted to certain practices of readers and critics in interpreting literature. It was seen that quite often people judged a piece of literature by the effect it had on them. If the effect was great it was great literature, if the effect was bad it was bad work. New critics called this way of reading affective fallacy.

Another practice was to find what the author intended to achieve. If the intention was noble the work must be great. New critics pointed out that what the author intended and what he actually achieved in his work are two very different things. The reader should not concern himself with authorial intentions. Such a concern would be termed intentional fallacy.

These terms as critical concepts were introduced by W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley in an essay published in 1946.

12.3.3.1 The Affective Fallacy

From Plato and Longinus to I. A. Richards, the effect of a literary work on its reader had always been given some importance. Richards even said that the value of a poem can be measured by the psychological responses it incites in its readers (*Principles of Literary Criticism*, 1923). Reacting to this theory, Wimsatt and Beardsley said that when a poem is evaluated in terms of its effect – emotional effect, in particular – it results in the error of affective fallacy. As a consequence, "the poem itself, as an object of specifically critical judgment, tends to disappear", thus leading to the byways of "impressionism and relativism". Beardsley later modified his position by saying that "it does not appear that critical evaluation can be done at all except in relation to certain types of effect that aesthetic object have upon their perceivers". According to M H Abrams,

So modified, the doctrine becomes a claim for objective criticism, in which the critic, instead of describing the effects of a work, focuses on the features, devices, and form of the work by which such effects are achieved.

Relegating the reader's self, in which alone any art comes to life, to a subsidiary position led to strong reactions from other critics. To quote Princeton Encyclopedia,

David Daiches has questioned this position by claiming that some form of legitimate affectiveness is necessary if the qualified reader is to avoid the "ontological fallacy of believing that a work of art fulfils its purpose and achieves its value simply by being". He has suggested that a real relationship does exist between poetic effect and poetic value,

and that affectivism can be saved from impressionistic and relativistic fallacies if the reader traces the “actual or potential effect” of the work upon himself to the internal structure of the work which has caused such an effect. Daiches has thus suggested the relevance of “emotional effect as a guide to value”.

The reader-response theory that arose in 1970s has strongly questioned the validity of Affective Fallacy.

12.3.3.2 The Intentional Fallacy

According to Wimsatt and Beardsley the error of Intentional Fallacy arises when we search outside the text for its author’s intentions and motives in writing it, when we look for incidents in author’s life or the psychological make up of his personality to ascertain the meaning of a text. For example, how does it help the merit of a love-poem to know if the poet wrote it for his childhood friend or for his neighbour’s wife, or whether he was a moral or an immoral person? If you are a capitalist, you will always find faults with Marxist poetry, and if you are a communist, you will avoid all poetry from a capitalist country. In either case you suspect a purpose, an intention with which you are not comfortable. It is only when the author’s background is completely dropped that we can appreciate the poem for what it is. This is precisely what New Critics were advocating. To quote Abrams,

Reference to the author's supposed purposes, or else to the author's personal situation and state of mind in writing a text, is held to be a harmful mistake, because it diverts our attention to such "external" matters as the author's biography, or psychological condition, or creative process, which we substitute for the proper critical concern with the "internal" constitution and inherent value of the literary product.

Some critics, however, are of the view that if the author has categorically stated his purpose in writing – either in prefaces or in personal letters (for example, George Bernard Shaw and John Keats) – then the authorial intentions deserve consideration without allowing them to influence the judgement of an impartial critic.

12.3.4 Reader-Response Theory

You saw earlier how romantic subjectivity and classical objectivism oscillate like day night. It is no surprise therefore that after a long reign of the classical New Criticism, the subjective Reader should stage a comeback with aplomb. As everything romantic, he remains ever-elusive, and critics, like those blind men in the Indian fable of Six Blind Men and the Elephant, are engaged in a continuing debate about the nature of the Reader and reading. You know how those six blind men had stationed themselves in differing positions – some in the front, some in the back, and others on the sides. Similarly, the critics engaged in reader-response criticism have positioned themselves in differing camps: phenomenology, reception theory, structuralism, poststructuralism, deconstruction, subjective criticism, psychoanalytic criticism, affective stylistics, gender criticism and feminism. Fortunately, what connects them all is the elephant, the Reader.

All these schools of thought are unanimous in rejecting the notion that a text is an autonomous entity with a finished structure of meanings. The meaning is not in the text. It is something created by the reader for himself or herself. Meaning is not fixed. It is dynamic and

comes into being as the reader brings all of himself into interaction with what has been worded by the author. There is therefore no such thing as the meaning which is universally acceptable to all readers. The western poetics has taken a step closer to Tulsi – Jaakee rahee bhavana....

It is this bhavana, the psychic content – or the psychological, cultural and intellectual conditioning – that gives a definite personality to the reader and makes him different from every other, even if they belong to Stanley Fish's same interpretive community. In the act of reading – which is defined as a process of expectation, violation, deferment, satisfaction, and restructuring of meanings – the reader brings all of himself, the whole baggage, in order to create a very personal shade of meaning, even if it be in some broad general direction. As you read, with involvement and passion, Hamlet becomes a close personal friend and Cleopatra shares a smile with you. This friendship and smile is unique to you; they will not share the same thing with anyone else.

Such an absolute freedom may create a self-doubt: what if I am misreading? Well, the text does set some defining limit that controls, constrains and safeguards you from going overboard. Do you ever fear taking Ram for a demon and Ravana for a god, or turning Cleopatra into a Sita? Finally, have solace, for Harold Bloom says, all "reading is ... misreading"; the only difference is that between a "strong" misreading and a "weak" misreading.

Wolfgang Iser, the German phenomenological critic, is of the view that although the author's intentional acts create the limits for interpretation, there are always some "gaps" or "indeterminate elements" in the text that the reader is called upon to fill with his own imagination and repertoire of experience. Iser also distinguishes between the implied and the actual reader. The implied or imagined reader is the one the author had in mind while creating his text. (For example, while writing this Unit I have a reader in mind who is an Indian, so that I need not explain Tulsi, Ramayana, Ghalib and many other well-known facts of Indian culture; who has a decent grasp over English language so that I need not adopt an over-simple, school-level style; who is also a little familiar with English literature and knows or can find out about Shakespeare, Hamlet and Cleopatra). Then there is the actual reader, who may be very different from the implied one, and because of this difference, or degree of difference, the author has no control over him. This reader, depending on the nature and development of his mind, may understand, misunderstand, or not understand at all many of the symbols, images and verbal patterns woven in the text.

In *Structuralist Poetics* (1975), Jonathan Culler introduces another category: "the competent reader", who has been well-trained in literary conventions, codes and rules and is therefore qualified to venture into the field of literary reading. (Do you see that we have designed this Course just for that purpose, to make you a "competent reader"?) Such a training imposes another "constraint", structures your reading experience, and saves you from much 'misreading'. Roland Barthes, a great structuralist critic, suggests that the more structures you assimilate, the more varied interpretations you can bring to a text.

Another set of gurus of literary theory, the school of Deconstruction equips you to destroy all structures so as to read a text as a play of infinite linguistic "differences". Such a reading can "generate innumerable and mutually contradictory, but 'undecidable' meanings" (Abrams).

Stanley Fish has termed his theory “Affective Stylistics”. According to Fish, the act of reading converts the spatial sequence of words on a printed page into a temporal flow of experience in the mind of a reader who has acquired some “literary competence”. The reader makes sense of what he has read by anticipating what is to come. At times these expectations may come true, but quite often the reader discovers that he has made a mistake and therefore ‘misread’ the text. Fish says, “the meaning of an utterance” is the reader’s “experience”, therefore his mistakes are integral “part of the experience provided by the author’s language”.

There is another school that “situates” a text in its socio-political context and generates a plethora of political meanings – colonial, postcolonial, bourgeois, socialistic, Leninist-Marxist-Maoist.

The last in the list of our blind men are not men but women, the feminists, who, not without justification, find most cultures, texts and languages predominantly male-oriented, and like crusaders of old are hell-bent on exposing how all texts are infested with gender-bias.

To them I owe an apology. I am aware that my own language is no exception to this gender-bias: I have tried to adapt to the contemporary trend of using the possessives ‘his or her’ or even the grammatically incorrect neuter gender ‘their’ for a singular subject, but... I always revert to the old-fashioned ‘his’!

12.3.5 Sahridaya

I am glad to be back in India, aren’t you? One cannot stay too long in the West, in foreign lands, at least I cannot. In the nineteenth century when Indians travelled abroad, which was known as the land of mlechhas, they lost their dharma and purity. On their return, they had to perform some kind of ritual, may be a bath in holy waters of Ganges, to regain their Indianness. I will tell you a story: well, that’s an ancient way of teaching in this country.

One of our greatest critics, C. D. Narasimhaiah went to Cambridge and studied under the great F. R. Leavis. He also went to Princeton and was with Blackmur; in Australia he collaborated with Patrick White. He returned home to teach at Indian universities and to recover his cultural roots. He delivered his last lecture An Inquiry into the Indianness of Indian English Literature at Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi in 2003, when he was 82. In the following excerpt, taken from this lecture, he is explaining Blake:

The resultant state is para-nivritti, total release from the bondage of the world. And for the reader, momentary detachment, when there is perception, antardarsana, thanks to the unravelling, bhagnavarana, breaking through the veils of Maya, an experience, one may presume, that was common to the primitive man with his vasanas, inner dispositions in his state of nature, as well as rishis with their samskara, cultivated sensibility. And to us, in this technological age, its residual transmission, svalpam apasya dharmasya...! a little of that reward.

Does he sound like a Cambridge scholar and a professor of English? After his retirement he opened a research centre for Indian studies and named it Dhvanyaloka. Why do all great Indian scholars of English return to Sanskrit poetics?

Dhvanyaloka is name of the book written by Anandavardhana in 8th century A.D. It is the next most important work of Sanskrit Poetics after Bharat Muni's *Natyashastra*. Anandavardhana introduced the concept of reader as *Sahridaya*, which was later treated in detail by his commentator, *Abhinavagupta*. But the idea in its seed form can be traced back to *Natyashastra*: "Bharata stated that the best spectator was one who could enter into the play and feel glad when the character is joyous and sad when he is sorrow-stricken" (Princeton).

According to the Indian metaphysical tradition, Truth can be known only by negation. One cannot say what is truth; one can only say what it is not. Falsehood can be named, described and taught, not truth. All the branches of knowledge taught in academies are *avidya*. *Vidya* cannot be taught. The guru can only supervise the growth of his disciple, much as a mother supports her growing baby.

The theory of *dhvani* posits that the meaning, the substance of a poem is not in the words, in the arrangement of words, or in any other technique employed by the poet. The beauty of a woman is not in the parts of her body, even though each part be exquisitely crafted and beautiful; it lies in the wholeness of the body and something beyond the body. What we call meaning in literature is truth and beauty – beauty is truth, and truth beauty, as Keats said – and these cannot be crafted or created by any embellishment of poetry. These can only be suggested, not shown. *Dhvani* is the theory of suggestion. The poet can suggest only that which he knows: the reader can see only that which he knows! Therefore, only in the event when the two – the poet and the reader – become one, the meaning of a poem comes into being. The reader is no less important than the poet, and must be equal in every respect to the poet.

Therefore, Anandavardhana's *Sahridaya* is not like any other reader. He shares a similar sensibility with the poet and is equally well-trained in the finer nuances of the poetic art. It is this kind of critic who deciphers the core of a poem and unearths its meaning. He is so important and regarded so highly that the meaning given by him to a poem is the meaning: *yo arthah sahriday shlaaghyah kaavyatmeti vyavasthitah* – the meaning derived by a *sahridaya* critic resides in the very soul of the poem.

Only when you find a complete unity with your author, only when you feel like him, think like him, see and experience like him, only then will it be possible for you to participate in the vision and experience contained in a poem. Reading therefore is as much *sadhana* as writing of a poem. Speaking apropos Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*, *Sisirkumar Ghose* once remarked: But where are the readers of Savitri? When *Abhinavagupta* (10th-11th century) wrote his commentary on *Dhvanyaloka*, he raised the status of *Sahridaya* even higher. To quote K. Krishnamoorthy,

Literally, *sahridaya* means 'one with a kindred heart'; but *Abhinavagupta* would prefer to think that the spirits of the ideal poet and the ideal literary critic are one and the same, not just similar. The names are two; but the spirit is one. Hence mere grammarians, dry logicians and science specialists have no right to attempt literary criticism. In the nature of things, it is the task of more gifted souls who have an aesthetic taste.

Poetic genius, *pratibha*, is a gift one is born with. It cannot be given or acquired. Similarly, according to Sanskrit poetics, critical genius is also a gift that comes from gods.

EXERCISE 1

2. Write a brief not on 'New Criticism'.
2. How are the two fallacies related to the new criticism?
3. What was the background for the rise of 'reader-response' theory?
4. How is the concept of sahridaya different from western concepts of reading?
5. The concept of two fallacies was introduced by
 1. T S Eliot
 2. F R Leavis
 3. Wimsatt and Brooks
 4. Wimsatt and Beardsley

12.4 Experience of art

But surely art is not merely an artefact, an object that can be analysed and dissected to uncover its mystery. It is something that must be lived and experienced in the heart; only there can it be known, and not in the analytical brain. Do you think life can ever be known by studying biology or sociology, or is it something that is known only in experiencing it? Is the heart which poets call the seat of all experience the same as the biological heart? Can the most elaborate analysis of a child's or a woman's heart ever bring you any closer to it?

Well, all this did not deter Addison from the "dissection of a coquette's heart"! But this does not mean that the western aesthetics is unaware of the futility, even stupidity, of analysing the experience of art. "Our meddling intellect / Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:- / We murder to dissect," said Wordsworth, loud and clear.

As against the multiplicity of Rasas in Indian aesthetics, the western mind can think of only two – pity and terror (pathos, as the third, appears a poor cousin). Here is Alexander Pope on the experience of poetry (not on experience, per se, which is the forte of Indian aesthetics):

- i. Let me for once presume t' instruct the times,
- ii. To know the Poet from the Man of rhymes:
- iii. 'Tis he, who gives my breast a thousand pains,
- iv. Can make me feel each passion that he feigns;
- v. Enrage, compose, with more than magic Art,
- vi. With Pity, and with Terror, tear my heart; (Essay on Man)

What is he saying? That poetry evokes! But what? A fleeting sentiment? Is there any emotion greater than the celebrated twins, pity and fear/terror?

When one turns to an encyclopaedia of western poetics, one is dismayed to find only a handful of entries on the experience of art – catharsis, pathos, empathy (which is not exactly an

experience), as against a thousand on the art and craft, and the methodology of reading and analysis.

Quite in contrast, the experience of art is of paramount importance in the Indian aesthetic tradition. The theory of Rasa is about the nature of all experience, and not only of art or literature.

12.4.1 The theory of Rasa

It's difficult to find an exact equivalent English word for Rasa. Do you know why? Language is a product and codification of culture. Language and culture exist in an inseparable unity. Culture is rooted in the ontology of a race or people, in their perception of the ultimate Reality. The philosophical belief of Indian people is reflected in their most ancient literature, the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Epics. You will find the most illiterate villagers in this country talking about Maya. Ontology of a race is something living, something throbbing in the body cells and blood vessels; it has nothing to do with intellectual debates among scholars. Indian culture is very different from the western culture, because the two cultures are rooted in very differing – sometime even opposing – ontologies. The two races see the world and reality very differently, and therefore use words that are unique to them. It is for this reason that you do not find an exact equivalent English word for Rasa.

Experience is the tasting and awareness of the flow of living waters through every pore in your system. It is Rasa. There can be no other word for it. This is the only way you ever meet God or the mystery of life. You live it, you taste it, you participate in it; and when you do so, you become a rasika. The sufi poetry is replete with the images of drinking wine. Indians called it som-rasa, but som is not the only quality of Rasa: you can drink it in many other ways. But what is Rasa? The upanishad says, raso vai sah, God is Rasa. Why is Krishna's play called Raas-lila? Why is the tongue called rasana?

The Indian aestheticians of yore discovered that to bring out Rasa and to allow their audience to partake of it was the one and only purpose of all arts, including literature. According to Jagannatha, the 17th century master-theoretician of Sanskrit poetics, Rasa-ananda or aesthetic bliss is “the manifestation of the inner light and bliss of the Self (Atman) when the encrustations obscuring it are broken down by the impact of art”. In our own times, Tagore said that “aesthetic joy is the foretaste of spiritual realisation and that all art is thus a spiritual aid, sadhana” (Princeton). K. Krishnamoorthy neatly sums up:

Rasa is the essence of all literature. It vitally animates all the constitutive elements of literature from within; and even like life in a living body, its existence cannot be gainsaid though it eludes our sense-perception... So understood, it is the ultima thule (ultimate end) of all literature, the highest aesthetic value which is an end in itself. It can be attained only by a few gifted souls with hearts akin to the poets' (sahridayas or rasikas) because it is highly imaginative on the one hand and spiritual on the other.

Although the concept of Rasa finds mention in the Veda and Upanishads, it was Bharat Muni who, in the 3rd century A.D. or before, formulated it as an aesthetic theory in his Natyashastra. According to Bharat, there are eight permanent or abiding emotions, sthaayi-bhaav, inherent constitutionally in the nature of every living creature. These are aroused and then activated further by a combination of circumstances, Vibhaav – or what Eliot called the ‘objective

correlative?; Anubhaav, the attendant material manifestation of bhaav in gesture, countenance and speech; and a host of vyabhichaari or sanchaari bhaavas, the fleeting sentiments and feelings that rise and die like waves all through a happening but contributing all the while to building the majesty of the sthaayi-bhaav. All these together, in close conjunction, bring about the birth of Rasa, of Experience.

Bharat gives a list of eight Rasas. Since then Abhinavagupta has added Shaanta-rasa as the ninth and the greatest; some others have tried to include Bhakti-rasa, and a modern scholar (Dehejia) attempts unconvincingly to add a few more. Rasa and Sthaayi-bhaav stand conjointly in a one to one relationship, as the following table illustrates (the English equivalents are those chosen by Krishnamoorthy):

<i>Sthaayi-bhaav</i>	<i>Rasa</i>
1. Love of sexes (rati रति)	the erotic (shringaar शृंगार)
4. Laughter (haasa हास)	the comic (haasya हास्य)
5. Sorrow (shoka शोक)	the pathetic (karuna करुणा)
7. Heroic engery (utsaah उत्साह)	the heroic (vira वीर)
6. Fear (bhaya भय)	the frightful (bhayanaka भयानक)
5. Anger (krodha क्रोध)	the furious (raudra रौद्र)
4. Disgust (jugupsa जुगुप्सा)	the odious (beebhatsa बीभत्स)
1. Wonderment (vismaya विस्मय)	the marvellous (adbhuta अद्भुत)
9. Dispassion (shama शम)	the tranquil (shaanta शान्त)

Though it would be difficult to list and name every fleeting sentiment and feeling (vyabhichaari or sanchaari bhaavas), Bharat, for the purposes of drama, gives the following list of 33:

1. Revulsion (nirveda निर्वेद)
2. Anguish (glani ग्लानि)
3. Suspicion (shankaa शंका)
4. Jealousy (asuya असूया)
5. Arrogance (mada मद)
6. Fatigue (shrama श्रम)
7. Lassitude (aalasya आलस्य)
8. Wretchedness (dainya दैन्य)
9. Worry (chinta चिन्ता)
10. Stupor (moha मोह)
11. Remembrance (smriti स्मृति)
12. Steadfastness (dhriti धृति)
13. Shame (vreedalajja व्रीडा / लज्जा)
14. Fickleness (chupalata चपलता)
15. Joy (harsha हर्ष)
16. Agitation (aavega आवेग)
17. Foolishness (jadata जड़ता)
18. Pride (garva गर्व)
19. Despair (vishada विषाद)
20. Eagerness (autsukya औत्सुक्य)
21. Sleep (nidra निद्रा)
22. Forgetfulness (apasmaara अपस्मार)
23. Dreaminess (supti/swapna सुप्ति/स्वप्न)
24. Wakefulness (vibodha विबोध)
25. Indignation (amarsha अमर्ष)
26. Dissimulation (avahittha अवहित्था)
27. Ferocity (ugrata उग्रता)
28. Decision (mati मति)
29. Sickness (vyadhi व्याधि)
30. Madness (unmada उन्माद)
31. Death (marana मरण)
32. Terror (trasa त्रास)
33. Doubt (vitarka वितर्क)

As you can see, many of the English words do not fully convey the idea behind the Sanskrit words – for example, jadata is more than foolishness, and unmaad as a fleeting feeling can only be described as a variety of momentary madness. Therefore it becomes necessary to know them in original.

12.4.2 Catharsis

In contrast to Indian aesthetics, the study of Experience is hardly dealt with in any detail in the western tradition. There is only one major concept, of catharsis, in Aristotle's Poetics touching upon the subject. According to Aristotle, tragedy by arousing the feelings of pity and fear in the spectators effects the purgation of such emotions. The function of art, therefore, is therapeutic; it removes the psychic toxins and restores the psychological health.

The western art, therefore, has nothing whatsoever to do with God or soul. If there are holy sonnets, or sermons, they are either theological or else a statement of personal faith. If the romantics somehow qualify as *rasikas*, the experience is seldom more than marginal. The divinity for Wordsworth ends as Nature, for Keats as Beauty: the experience dissipates into a mist of concepts. Even the romantic art never goes beyond a therapeutic value, beyond what is valued as 'secular'. It is such a hopelessness of poetic faith that makes Wordsworth renounce it in favour of the orthodox church.

For a more detailed treatment of catharsis, refer to the Drama section in an earlier Unit.

12.4.3 Pathos and Sentimentality

Pathos is one emotion that is treated with some respect in western literature, for example as in Charles Lamb. It is defined as a quality that arouses the feeling of pity, tenderness and sorrow in the spectator or reader. As value, it is rated much lower than logos, which is "the Word of God, or principle of divine reason and creative order," and even lower than ethos – which is defined as "the characteristic spirit of a culture, era, or community as manifested in its attitudes and aspirations", and is rooted in Ethics of a people.

The mysterious ground of emotions that was sublimated into a theory of Rasa by Indian aestheticians becomes a butt of ridicule as sentimentalism in western poetics. There is no concept to describe the value of emotions when they are treated strictly according to canons of aesthetics, but when they are not, it is called 'sentimentality'. According to Princeton Encyclopedia, sentimentality in poetry consists of

(1) poetic indulgence in the exhibition of pathetic emotions for their own sake; (2) poetic indulgence of more emotion (often of a self-regarding kind) than seems warranted by the stimulus; (3) excessively direct poetic expression of pathos without a sufficient poetic correlative. Whether found in poet or reader, sentimentality (a form of emotional redundancy, and thus a fault of rhetoric as well as of ethics) often suggests the presence of self-pity and the absence of mature self-control.

Aj-vilap in Kalidas's Raghuvansh or Ram's vilap following the abduction of his wife would appear pure sentimentality to a western audience. Arnold's 'forsaken merman', even when he has clearly been betrayed by his mermaid, shows a "mature self-control" over his emotions – he feels like crying but will not cry.

12.4.4 Empathy and Sympathy

The word was introduced in 1909 by Titchener when translating the German word *Einfühlung* (feeling into). The concept refers to an involuntary identification with a person or an object, as when spoon feeding a child the mother opens her mouth. But the idea was long there before it was introduced by Germans as a critical concept. M. H. Abrams notes:

When John Keats said that he becomes "a part of all I see," and that "if a sparrow comes before my window I take part in its existence and pick about the gravel," he was describing an habitual experience of his intensely empathic temperament, long before the word was coined.

Sympathy on the other hand refers to a 'fellow-feeling', an agreement in sentiments and ideas. Abrams, once again, illustrates the difference: "We 'sympathise,' for example, with the emotional experience of a child in his first attempt to recite a piece in public; we may also 'empathise' as he falters in his speaking or makes an awkward gesture".

EXERCISE 2

1. Discuss the most fundamental difference between the Indian and the Western poetics on the nature of the experience of art.
2. What is the difference between sthaayi bhav and vyabhichari bhav?
3. Why did the general practice of arousing pathos come under attack by critics?
4. What is the basic difference between sympathy and empathy?
5. How many Rasas were listed by Bharat?
 - (a) 8
 - (b) 9
 - (c) 18
 - (d) 33
6. Who introduced the Shaanta Rasa?
 - (a) Anandavardhana
 - (b) Abhinavagupta
 - (c) Both the above
 - (d) Bharat Muni

12.5 SUMMING UP

In this Unit we have learned

- To differentiate the various elements in the movement of close reading
- To be aware of problems in reading and interpretation
- To contrast the Indian and Western approaches to the reading of literature

In addition to the above, we looked closely at two major critical concepts from India: Sahridaya and the theory of Rasa. We have also discussed the problem of translating Indian critical concepts into English.

12.6 ANSWERS TO SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Exercise 1

1. Refer to 13.3.1
2. Refer to 13.3.3
3. Refer to 13.3.4
4. Refer to 13.3.5
5. D

Exercise 2

1. Refer to 13.4 and 13.4.1
2. Refer to 13.4.1
3. Refer to 13.4.3
4. Refer to 13.4.4
5. A
6. B

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12.8 TERMINAL AND MODEL QUESTIONS

1. Discuss how the presence of ambiguity makes the reading of literature a richer experience.
2. How did New Criticism usher in a new reign of reading and interpretation?
3. Attempt a critical analysis of the various approaches involved in Reader-Response Theory.
4. Critically analyse the uniqueness of the theory of Rasa.

UNIT 13 **PROSE**

13.1 Introduction

13.2 Objectives

13.3 Prose

 13.3.1 Autobiography

 13.3.2 Biography

 13.3.3 Pamphlet

 13.3.4 Tract

13.4 Style

 13.4.1. Wit

 13.4.2. Humour

 13.4.3. Comic

 13.4.4. Rhetoric

13.5 Novel

 13.5.1 Rise of Novel

 13.5.2 Types of Novel

13.6 Summary

13.7 References

13.8 Suggested Reading

13.9 Terminal End Questions

13.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit you read about the various techniques of reading and analyzing literature from both western and Indian perspective. This unit will take up some important terms and concepts in prose and fiction, elements of literary style and the genre of novel.

13.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- Understand some important kinds of prose namely biography, autobiography, pamphlet and tract
- Identify the various elements of literary style namely wit, humour, comic and rhetoric
- Understand the development of novel as a literary genre
- Identify different types of novel

13.3 PROSE

Prose is a literary form of writing which employs the natural flow of speech to convey the writer's thoughts and emotions. It stands in stark contrast to verse as it lacks the more formal metrical structure of verse that is found in traditional poetry. Prose is a relatively new literary form as it developed around the sixteen century. In the literary world, the French writer Montaign is known to be the 'Father of Essays.' But could writers like Montaign, or Sir Francis Bacon really be responsible for introducing this form of writing into literature or could it be that some other factors contributed to the growth and development of literary prose. This is a question worth pondering and to find the answer to it one needs to understand as to why the various literary form come into existence. If we trace the origin of poetry, it predates history. In ancient times, it was mainly used to invoke and eulogise the almighty. Narratives like epic poetry dealt with lofty themes and men of high stature and men from the ordinary walk of life looked up to the epic heroes with awe. However, as time passed, man began to evolve. He started questioning the existence of things, as a result, his reasoning power started to sharpen and prose, which employs the running form of speech, became a convenient mode for expressing the complexities of the human mind. It is for this reason that disciplines like science and philosophy, which rely on logic, make use of prose as a medium of expression. With the passage of time, literature too, like other disciplines underwent a sea change. As life became more complex writers started finding it difficult to express the complexities of life in the verse form, as verse form is less flexible and has less scope for experimentation. Moreover, with the passage of time, the focus of literature, which holds a which mirror to life, also changed from the heroic and religious themes to man and the things that concerned him. With this change of subject matter, the form of expression also underwent a change for a new form was required for this new content . A change was further witnessed in literature with the rise of capitalism, as with capitalism a new class (the middle class) emerged. An average middle class reader was given to light reading. The growth of printing press also resulted in proliferation of printed material which made books easily available for an average reader. All this resulted in the development of various new genres of literature which included autobiography, novel, novella and short-stories which made use of prose as a medium of expression.

13.3.1 AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The word autobiography came into English at the very end of the 18th century. It comes from the Greek words, 'auto' meaning 'self', 'bios' meaning 'life' and 'graphein' meaning 'to write'. Thus, autobiography is an account of the author's life. However, unlike a biography, it is never complete because it comes to an end before the death of the writer. An autobiography aims at successful presentation of the writer's personality. From a psychological point of view too, we can say that a man knows himself the best and is able to give a true account of his life. He is capable of explaining things like the motives behind his actions at a particular moment, his secret hopes and aspirations and his hidden personality. Dr. Johnson, the great lexicographer rightly remarked on autobiography when he said,

The writer of his own life has at least the first qualification of a historian. The knowledge of the truth; and though it may be plausibly objected that his temptations to disguise it are equal to his opportunities of knowing it, yet I cannot but think that impartially maybe expected with equal confidence from him that relates the passage of his own life as from him that delivers the transactions of another.'

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, the great American poet once remarked, 'Autobiography is a product of firsthand experience, biography the second hand knowledge.' And thus should be a true account of events. The autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi, *The Story of My Experiments With Truth*, is an honest account of Gandhiji's relentless quest for *Truth*.

In a biography, the writer might be tempted to draw certain conclusions from his account of the concerned person's life. He may project the concerned person as a demi-god if he is especially inclined to the thoughts of the person in discussion. On the other hand, if he is particularly averse to the concerned person's ideology, he may project the person as a loathsome object. We can take Hitler as an extreme example. If a writer were to write Hitler's biography, he would surely project Hitler as a tyrannical and evil person irrespective of what the real motive behind his actions was. The reader would then be forced to think from the writer's perspective. He would not have the freedom to form his independent opinion about Hitler. On the other hand, if one were to read Hitler's autobiography *Mein Kampf*, he would not only have the privilege of getting an insight into Hitler's mind and ideology but also have the advantage of other historical facts about him. He would thus have the luxury of forming an independent opinion about Hitler and all his actions.

If we trace the history of autobiography, we can consider that Saint Augustine's *Confessions* (5th century A.D.) one of the earliest examples of autobiography. St. Augustine's autobiography was religious in nature as it focused on St. Augustine's religious life. Later, John Bunyan followed Augustine's example of religious self-revelation in his *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666). However, in the eighteenth century, Rousseau came out with his *Confessions*, which can be termed as the first major autobiography as it dealt with the life of Rousseau in terms of worldly experiences and personal feelings. The book exerted a strong influence on European thought. The eighteenth century saw the publication of three more notable autobiographies - those of David Hume, Edward Gibon and Benjamin Franklin. These writers inspired a host of other people in different fields to write narratives on their respective lives and with this started a tradition of writing autobiographies.

Some other forms of writing which holds similarity with autobiography are **memoire, diary, letter and journals**. These can be grouped as sub-class of autobiography. A memoire, unlike autobiography, focuses more on people and events that the author has known or witnessed. Diaries and journals are accounts which record the happenings over the course of the

day. These usually include a person's experiences, thoughts or feelings including comments or current events outside the writer's direct experience. Some notable memoirists and diarists were Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn in the 17th century, Fanny Burney in the late 18th Century, and Thomas Creevey and Charles Greenville in the nineteenth century. Similarly letters like those of the Paston family in the 15th century, Dorothy Osborne in the 17th century, and later the letters of Thomas Gray, William Cowper, Horace Walpole, Charles Lamb and John Keats are of great significance in English Literature. James Boswell, Fanny Burney and Dorothy Wordsworth were also well-known for their remarkable journals.

However, besides pure autobiographies, we have many literary works, which though are not pure autobiographies, but have a strong streak of the autobiographical element. Wordsworth's *Prelude, or Growth of a Poet's Mind*, Charles Lamb's *Essays of Elia* and Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* all have an autobiographical touch.

Some elements of Autobiography:

- **Chronological Order:** Chronological order is the order in which real-life events occur and the order in which most writers tell the stories of their life. Often autobiographies are arranged from childhood to adulthood.
- **Point of View:** It is the perspective from which an autobiography is written. Since autobiographies are written by their subjects, they are told from the writer's perspective, thus, the readers experience events through the writer's eye.
- **Author's Purpose:** The author usually has an intention behind writing a piece of work. He may want to educate, enlighten or motivate people through the lessons he or she has learned in life or may simply want to tell the story of his life. For example, Booker T. Washington's *Up From Slavery* traces Washington's struggle from servitude to success. His philanthropic works like the setting up of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama inspires the reader and teaches the lessons of fortitude, courage, determination and benevolence. Some authors like Hitler want to clarify their actions and wish to influence the readers' thoughts and opinions.
- **Details of autobiography:** auto biographers use both objective and subjective details to tell the stories of their life. The narratives which mainly focus on the public life of the writer have an element of objectivity in them as the details in it can be proved. On the other hand, when a writer focuses on personal feelings, opinions and anecdotes, the taste is subjective.

Difficulties while writing autobiographies:

Anyone who sits down to pen the story of his life has to confront problems. Some of the difficulties encountered in writing autobiographies are listed as under:

- An autobiography is mostly based on the writer's memory and at times it is very difficult to recapture the events of the distant past with accuracy.
- An autobiography should be a true account of events and emotions. However, there are always episodes in one's life that are embarrassing, not only for the author to disclose but also for the reader to read. Hence, a writer may efface the not so pleasant experiences of his life, as a result of this the autobiography is not completely true. However, Mahatma Gandhi's autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* is one of the most

honest autobiographies ever written as in it Gandhiji bluntly exposes his follies and weaknesses in a straightforward manner.

- It is almost impossible to give an objective and detached account of matters which have profoundly affected one's personal happiness or prosperity.

13.3.2 BIOGRAPHY

The word 'biography' is derived from the Greek 'bios' meaning 'life' and 'graphein' meaning 'to write'. The Oxford dictionary defines biography as "history of the lives of individual men as a branch of literature." The tradition of biographies goes down to the Greek and Roman writers who produced short, formal lives of individuals. The most famous extant biographies are *Parallel Lives* of the famous Greek and Roman personalities by the Greek scholar, Plutarch and *Lives of Caesars* by Suetonius. Plutarch's work was later translated into English by Sir Thomas North in 1579, which later acted as a source for Shakespeare's plays on Roman subjects. In the Middle Ages, authors wrote hagiographies (biographies of saints and ecclesiastical leaders) and accounts on the affairs of kings. However, it was only in the seventeenth century that secular biographies started surfacing. One of the most celebrated early English biographies is Izaak Walton's *Lives*, written between 1640-78 which included short biographies on the lives of poets such as John Donne and George Herbert. The eighteenth century in England saw the blossoming of full biographies like Samuel Johnson's *Lives of English Poets* and James Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson*.

Biography is a study of an individual's personality as well as his achievements. It should focus on giving a truthful account of things else the work will become fictitious. Furthermore, a biography is a work of art, and should not be a mere listing of events and information to satisfy the idle curiosity of the reader. It should depict the character in such a way that it creates a spellbinding impression in the mind of the reader. Its function is "to transmit personality" and as Sir Sidney Lee says, "To build a living man out of dead bones." A good biographer should study his subject dispassionately and create a faithful and unbiased portrait of his subject, placing him and his subject in relation to the environment and social background of events.

Pure and Impure Biography:

A biography should be a faithful reproduction of the life of the subject, narrated in an artistic manner. Any biography, narrated keeping the above mentioned points will be a pure one. However, it is unfortunate that several factors may intervene to make biography "impure." For example, at times to honour the dead, the biographer may conceal the shortcomings of the deceased subject. This results in an uneven account. As mentioned earlier, a biographer should be objective in his approach, neither exaggerating the virtues nor emphasise the follies of the subject. A second factor that acts as a hurdle in the writing of a pure biography is the author's views and his prejudices. A good biographer should not give a biased or lop-sided account of the character he portrays.

Difficulties in the writing biographies:

Producing an account of another person's life requires a thorough study of the person's life and character. It is indeed a daunting task to portray the life account of a person, one does not know in person. Some of the most popular biographies of all times are usually written by the kith and kin of the subjects. For instance, Boswell was a close friend of Samuel Johnson, John Lockhart was the son-in-law of Sir Walter Scott and John Forster, the biographer of Charles Dickens, was his close associate. However, biographies are not always written by close associates and contemporary scholars. For such biographies, the task becomes even more challenging

because they do not have first-hand knowledge of the subject and have to rely on secondary sources and research-work to gather information on the subject. Therefore, it requires great skill and effort on the part of the author to write good biographies. Another challenge that a biographer faces is to encapsulate the life of the subject within the covers of a book. Furthermore, it is extremely difficult to give words to fleeting thoughts and concealed feelings of the subject. At times, psychological factors result in over emphasising certain facts in the subject's life. For instance, if a biographer finds a superficial resemblance between his life and the life of the subject, he has a tendency of creating him in his own image.

Carlyle made an apt remark when he said, "A well written biography is almost as rare as a well-spent one."

In spite of the above mentioned difficulties, biographers of different ages have produced some of the finest biographies in world literature. Some of the famous English biographies are Carlyle's *Sterling*, Froude's *Carlyle*, Lytton Strachey's *Queen Victoria*, Winston Churchill's *Marlborough*, Arthur Bryant's *Pepys* and Lord David Cecil's *The Stricken Deer*.

To conclude, a biographer must be conscientious and of scholarly bent of mind and through a proper understanding of the character he is portraying, should also give a complete and accurate estimate of his personality. To conclude, "Perhaps no other form of composition is so difficult: no other deals with such elusive material. Other forms of composition deal with thought and emotion, but Biography deals with the source of thought and emotion, with Man himself with his inward and outward manifestations. Who is sufficient for such a task?" W.H. Dunn.

13.3.3 Pamphlet

A pamphlet is a short piece of writing which is published separately, usually without hard covers and according to the UNESCO standards, should consist of 5-48 pages. The word has been derived from a 12th century love poem written in Latin and entitled *Pamphilus, seu de Amore*, meaning Concerning Love. Pamphilus's name was derived from Greek, meaning "friend to everyone". Pamphlets are usually polemical, ie. written either in praise or to defame people and their ideas. Earlier pamphlets were usually religious and political in nature. Such pamphlets were also known as tracts. However, with the advent of printing, the possibility of conveying one's ideas to a larger public became a reality and the pamphlet form of literature started being used as an economic vehicle for popularizing literary ideas. Thomas Deloney, Thomas Nashe and Thomas Dekker were among the most famous literary pamphleteers of the sixteenth century. These writers did not just use pamphlets to propagate religious and political ideas but also used them for writing romantic fiction, autobiography and social and literary criticism.

Pamphlets gained increasing recognition during the political and religious controversies in England during the 17th century. They played an important role in the debates between the Puritans and the Anglicans, and the King and the Parliament, during the English Civil War periods. Milton was one of the most famous pamphleteers of the seventeenth century. His *Areopagitica*, published in 1644, is a brilliant pamphlet written in defence of freedom of the press. During the restoration, the printing of pamphlets was checked and their range restricted to some extent by newspapers and periodicals. However, during the Glorious Revolution, (1688-89) pamphlets increased in importance as political weapons. The development of party politics gave employment to pamphleteers, including writers such as Joseph Addison, Richard Steele, Jonathan Swift and Daniel Defoe. Swift's satirical pamphlet, *A Modest Proposal* (1729) shows his indignation at the extreme misery of the Irish poor under the English government. Similarly Defoe's *The Shortest way of the Dissenters* is an ironical criticism on the government's religious policy which led to his imprisonment. The eighteenth century saw the rise of weekly periodicals,

which reduced the need of pamphlet form of literature. In the nineteenth century, the pamphlet played a part in the political movements of the country like the Oxford Movement and the Irish Home Rule. At the turn of the century, the members of the Fabian Society like George Bernard Shaw, Graham Wallas and Beatrice Webb disseminated political principle through a series of pamphlets. From the 20th century, the pamphlet has more been mainly used for disseminating information by the various government departments and other organisations.

13.3.4. Tract

A tract is a small pamphlet which is used mainly for religious and sometimes for political purposes. The history of tracts dates back to the 14th century when these short pieces of writing were used to propagate the religious teachings of John Wycliff. With the advent of the printing press, they were largely used to disseminate religious ideas. Later, during the 17th century, tracts were used as political tools to promulgate political thought.

Now let us read about these two kinds of tracts briefly.

- **Religious Tracts:** As stated earlier, tracts came into existence in the fourteenth century. However, it was during the turbulent 17th century that they became popular means of conveying religious ideas. With the establishment of the Religious Tract Society in 1799, tracts became popular with the masses. With the passage of time, the society moved from religious writing to publishing books and periodicals. In the nineteenth century, with the coming of the Oxford Movement, tracts started being used in large numbers as means of disseminating evangelical ideas. Later, after the publication of a series of religious essays, *Tracts for the Times*, (1833-41) the Oxford Movement also came to be known as the Tractarian Movement. Some important tract writers associated with the Oxford movement were Anglican clergymen John Henry Newman, John Keble, Edward Manning and Edward Pusey. These men aimed to increase the spiritual dignity and independence of the Church of England. Newman was the most influential member of the group who wrote the controversial theological pamphlet *Tract XC*, “which caused scandal by emphasising the closeness of the Anglican to the older Catholic tradition.”

As a result of the various cross cultural missionary movements, tracts have reached many foreign shores. These tract societies continue to flourish in these countries till date. To name a few of these societies, we have the American Tract Society, Zion’s Watchtower Tract Society and Living Waters Publications in the U.S. In India too we have tract societies like the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society and the Christian Literature Society of India and Africa, which in the year 1935 merged with the Religious Tract Society, London to form United Society for Christian Literature. The Religious Tract Society of China is another well known tract society which is funded by the Royal Tract Society of London and the Upper Tract Society, Canada.

- **Political Tracts:** Political Tracts, also known as pamphlets surfaced in Europe during the 17th century. In the 18th century, they played a key role in the American Revolution. A famous pamphlet written during the American Revolution was ‘Common Sense’ by Thomas Paine, one of the founding fathers of the United States. They were also used in the World War days to propagate political ideas. Today also political parties float political tracts or pamphlets to convey their political ideas to the public.

13.4 STYLE

Style refers to a particular way by which something is done. However, in literature it refers the proper arrangement of words, sentences and paragraphs and also the way a writer makes use of language to convey his thoughts and emotions. One may question the role of style in literature. When we compare ordinary language with literary language, we see that the major difference between the two is that ordinary language conveys the direct meaning of things whereas literary language has layers of meanings to it. When Coleridge says that the best poetry is only half understood, he means that it has layers of meanings to it, which cannot be comprehended on one reading. Thus, a great piece of art is one which never dies and holds relevance in every age. Have you ever wondered why some writers are timeless and why some fade away with the passage of time? Why writers like Homer, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Tolstoy, Balzac, Kabir are immortal? Perhaps, besides their themes, their writing style too contributes immensely in making their piece of work invaluable.

According to W.H. Hudson, style is composed of roughly three elements, namely, intellectual, emotional and aesthetic. The intellectual element consists in the precision and economy in the use of words, clarity of meaning and most importantly in the harmony between thought and expression. The emotional element conveys the thoughts of the author to the readers and has the power to cast a spell on the reader. Finally, the aesthetic element comprises of the artistic refinement of style and is responsible for imparting grace and beauty to a work. Let us now briefly examine some important terms that are associated with style.

13.4.1 Wit

The word 'wit' can be used in two ways. In general sense, it is a form of intellectual humour and the ability to say or write things in a clever and funny manner. However, it has a literary meaning too. Wit in poetry was exploited to the fullest by the Metaphysical Poets, who used brilliant and paradoxical style to convey their thoughts in a novel manner. In the words of M.H. Abrams "Wit is an expression that is brief, deft and intentionally contrived to produce a shock of comic surprise...the surprise is usually the result of a connection or distinction between words or concepts which frustrates a listener's expectation, only to satisfy it in an unexpected way." Abrams quotes Philip Guedalla, who dexterously turns a cliché expression about history into a novel and an apt one when she says "History repeats itself. Historians repeat each other. In a similar manner, Mae West remarked "Too much of good thing can be wonderful." This remark of West is what the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud calls "**harmless wit**" as it just evokes innocent laughter. Freud distinguishes 'harmless wit' from another kind of wit, "**tendency wit**", which unlike harmless wit is contemptuous, directing to mock at a particular thing.

13.4.2 Humour

The word "humour" is derived from the Latin word "humour", meaning "body fluid". According to the ancient Greek, Roman and Islamic physicians, the human body is composed of four humours or body fluids (blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile) which determine our personality by the relative proportions in which they are present. However, in general usage, it refers to the ability to be amused or to amuse other people. Humour should not be confused with wit as wit involves the working of the mind, whereas humour simply evokes laughter at something funny. Another thing that distinguishes wit from humour is that wit refers to only the spoken or the written word, whereas, humour has a wider range of reference. For example, there is humour in everything about Charlie Chaplin, the way he walks, looks, dresses and acts. Another important distinction between wit and humour is that wit is always intended by the author or the speaker to

be comic, whereas, many speeches that we find comically humorous are intended to be serious by the author or the speaker. For example, the speech made by the verbose nurse in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliette*, is intended to be a serious one by her. Similarly in Act III, Scene IV of *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare projects Malvolio as a comical figure through his appearance, actions and utterances, despite his serious demeanor. However, Malvolio evokes laughter in this scene of *Twelfth Night*. However, the greatest of Shakespeare's comic creations is Falstaff. Shakespeare exploits the comic to the fullest in portraying him. He is humorous in every respect. There is humour in the way he looks and in what he does. His statements are at times witty and at other times humorous. According to M.H. Abrams "...his actions and speech are sometimes unintentionally humorous, sometimes intentionally humorous,... -as in his whimsicality account to his skeptical auditors of how he bore himself in the highway robbery, *1 Henry iv*- they are humorous even beyond his intention."

13.4.3 Comic (adj.)

The word comic is derived from the Greek "komikos" meaning "of or pertaining to comedy". The Oxford Dictionary offers three meanings to the word 'comic', viz. 'causing or meant to cause laughter'; 'relating to or in the style of comedy'; 'a periodical containing comic strips, intended chiefly for children.' Like wit, comic also has two forms- **harmless comedy** and **tendency comedy**. Harmless comedy is that form of comedy which evokes innocent laughter. It can be said that humour is a "harmless" form of the comic. Tendency comedy, on the other hand, is a malicious or satirical laughter, intending to ridicule a person, thing or idea. Both tendency comedy and tendency wit are exploited in satire, the literary genre which ridicules and exposes human vices, follies, abuses and shortcomings. (For details on comic/ comedy please refer to the block on drama)

13.4.4 Rhetoric

The word 'rhetoric' has been derived from the Greek "oratorical" from "public speaker." Along with grammar and logic, rhetoric is one of the three ancient arts of discourses. Thus, it has a venerable tradition. It has been the primary basis of argument for 2500 years, since the time of Plato, Aristotle, the Roman Cicero and Quintilian and later Petrus Ramus. Earlier Rhetorics dealt with organization of ideas and was more of an outline process. However, with Petrus Ramus it became known more as stylistic improvement to writing.

In his book titled *Rhetoric*, Aristotle defined rhetorical discourse as the art of "discovering all the available means of persuasion in any given case." In his discourse, Aristotle laid emphasis on means and devices used by the orator to achieve intellectual and emotional effects on an audience. Thus, the orator makes use of Rhetoric to to that will influence the thinking of the audience. The later rhetoricians agreed with this view expressed by Aristotle. However, the Roman rhetorician Quintilian (c. 35 – c.100) added the element of morality in it by defining rhetoric as the art "of a good man skilled in speaking."

Following the footsteps of Aristotle, the later classical theorists analyzed an effective rhetorical discourse as consisting of three components: **invention** (the finding of arguments or proofs), **disposition** (the arrangement of such materials), and **style** (the choice of words, verbal patterns and rhythms)

Aristotle in his *Rhetoric* gave three persuasive audience appeals or modes in oratory that are still valid today. They are:

Ethos – has two primary meanings, one to establish one’s authority to discussing issues and the other, a moral argument. Thus, it appeals to authority and morality. Ethos establishes the authority of the speaker and the moral nature of argument.

Pathos- It is the emotional appeal. It is the root of the words like pathetic, empathy and is used to stir up our emotions. It is considered by many rhetoricians to be the most powerful approach, but it does not last long.

Logos- It comes from the Greek word “logic” which means logical reasoning. In this appeal, reasonable arguments are put together step by step in order to convince the higher faculty of men. This appeal uses fact and logic to convince someone of an argument.

Besides these three appeals, there are various rhetorical techniques that a writer or a speaker uses in order to enhance his piece of writing or speech. Rhetorical techniques add style and form to any presentation.

1. Use of fragments
2. Word Repetition
3. Sentence Structure Representation
4. Rhetorical Questions
5. Figurative language
6. Personification

1. Use of fragments: The author uses fragments intentionally in his work to draw attention to an idea or phrase. A few fragments can make one’s work impressive. Fragments are used by professional writers to draw attention to an important idea and at the same time it also used to prune the idea simultaneously.
2. Word Repetition is another important device used in Rhetorics. Certain important words are repeated by the speaker or the writer skilfully emphasizes certain ideas and points.
3. Sentence structure: It is a rhetorical strategy in which the writer wants to draw home a point by purposeful repetition of certain consonants and vowel sounds through figure of speech such as alliteration, consonance, assonance.
4. Rhetorical questions: Rhetorical questions help in assisting the writer or speaker in organizing topics and help him in carrying his material forward. These questions do not require an answer from the audience. Some examples of rhetorical questions are Do you want me to spank you? Do you think you are funny?
5. Figurative Language: It is one of the most important rhetorical techniques. Figurative language is used to make the presentation ornamental by enhancing its style and form. Similes, metaphors and other figures of speech are used by rhetoricians to embellish their writings.
6. Personification: Personification offers human characteristics to inanimate objects or animals. For example, when Wordsworth in his poem, ‘Lines Composed Upon the Westminster Bridge’ says, ‘...The city now doth, like a garment wear...’ he is giving human attributes to the city of London.

In spite of its venerable tradition, Rhetoric has often been used as a means of deceit. It was used by the Sophists for framing misleading arguments instead of discovering truth. In today’s world, it has become a crucial tool in politics and is often

considered defamatory as it has taken the form of empty speeches made by politicians. However, we should remember that rhetoric was viewed by Aristotle as a public art of shaping opinions and influencing civil life. We should make use of Rhetoric as a tool for building the character of a man which should be instrumental in laying a strong foundation of all aspects of society.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1

- Q1. Which work is considered to be the first autobiography?
 Q2. *Parallel Lives*, a famous biography is written by _____
 Q3. Who has authored *Life of Samuel Johnson*?
 Q4. Who remarked, "A well-written autobiography is almost as rare as a well spent one."
 Q5. What is Milton's pamphlet *Areopagitica* about?
 Q6. Write short notes on the following:
 tract, rhetoric, biography, humour

13.5 Novel

To use a term like 'novel' as a genre, we need some preliminary sense of what we mean by it and its development. Since novel as a genre has developed over time and is extremely open & flexible in form, it tries to resist any exact definition.

Since we are going to study about novel in this unit, we'll discuss about its origins, types.

Let us now try to work at defining a novel.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines that a work is novel if 'it is fictional, if it is in prose, and if it is of a certain length'. E.M. Foster in his work *Aspects of the Novel* states that a novel should have a minimum length of about 50,000 words. Anything in prose shorter to this would be a novella or a short novel. But this seems to be a very comprehensive definition.

The point it makes is, that a work has to be of certain length. Though it is not just the question of length, it is felt that a novel should in value an investigation of an issue of human significance in a manner and some complexity of treatment and complexity would require some length.

13.5.1 Rise of the Novel

The novel can be considered to have emerged from the earlier forms of epic and romance. An epic is a long narrative poem about the deeds of brave warriors, heroes who are 'larger than life' figures. It includes within it myths, legends, folktales etc. The western tradition has two types of epics – Primary (Which belong to the oral tradition) and Secondary (Which belong to the written form of literature) Homer's *Illiad* and the *Odyssey*, *Beowulf* are examples of primary epics. Virgil's *Aeneid* & Milton's *Paradise lost* are fine examples of the second type.

The modern form of novel was born primarily in the 17th Century but major development took place largely in 18th Century. It is said that the career of novel starts with the works of Richardson & Fielding.

Another important factor behind the development of novel in 18th Century is the Industrial revolution. The industrial development led to improvement in printing technology. This helped in increasing the circulation of books among general public. This also freed the writers

from the bondage of patronage; now it was the common public turned to reader which supported literary writing.

Romance as a literary form popular in medium times used to be an adventure story usually of love or chivalry and was written in verse. The word romance itself suggests of the elements of fantasy and extravaganza, as well as love & adventure. Though initially written in verse, over time it came to be written in prose.

I have tried to explain to you both epic & romance as they can be taken as ancestors of the modern novel. The novel owes its name to Italian word novella which means tale or a piece of news. The novel is called roman in French & is derived from the word romance. Another predecessor of novel was the picaresque narrative that originated in Spain in the 16th Century.

Henry Fielding's 'The History of Tom Jones' is an 18th Century novel written in the picaresque tradition.

13.5.2 Types of Novel

Realistic Novel

It is a fictional attempt to give the effect of realism. This sort of novel is sometimes called a novel of manners. A realistic novel can be characterized by its complex characters with mixed motives that are rooted in social class and operate according to a highly developed social structure. The characters in a realistic novel interact with other characters and undergo plausible and everyday experiences. Major exponents of realist novel are Defoe, Fielding, Austen and Henry James.

Prose Romance

This is a novel that is often set in the historical past with a plot that emphasizes adventure and an atmosphere that is removed from reality. The characters in a prose romance are sharply drawn villains or heroes, masters or victims; while the protagonist is solitary and isolated from society.

Novel of Incident

In a novel of incident the narrative focuses on what the protagonist will do next and how the story will turn out. Novel of Character A novel of character focuses on the protagonist's motives for what he/she does and how he/she will turn out.

Epistolary Novel

In this kind of novel the first person narrative progresses in the form of letters, journals, or diaries. Pamela by Samuel Richardson and recent Alice Walker's The Color purple are examples of this time.

Picaresque Novel

A picaresque novel relates the adventures of an eccentric or disreputable hero in episodic form.

Historical Novel

A historical novel is a novel set in a period earlier than that of the writing. As the name suggests this type of novel deals with characters and socio-political settings of real historical age. Walter Scott's Ivanhoe and Dickens's A Tale of Two Cities are examples.

Regional Novel

A regional novel is a novel that is set against the background of a particular area.

Non-fictional Novel

This type of novel depicts living people and recent events fictionalized in the form of a story.

13.6 Summary

In this unit we have learnt about:

- Some of the major forms of prose writing
- Different styles and techniques of prose writing
- The genre of novel
- Rise of novel and the types of novel

Check your Progress 2

- 1) Give definition of novel on the basis of what you read.
- 2) Give an analysis of the rise of the novel.
- 3) Was industrial revolution a factor behind the growth of the novel? How?
- 4) Name the different type of novels you have read.

ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1

- A1. Saint Augustine's *Confessions*
 - A2. Plutarch
 - A3. James Boswell
 - A4. Thomas Carlyle
 - A5. About freedom of the press
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13.7 REFERENCE

1. Abrams, M.H.(ed) *Norton Anthology*, London, UK.: W.W. Norton and Company. Print.
 2. Cuddon, J.A. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, London, UK.: Penguin.1976.Print.
 3. Quinn, Edward. *A Dictionary of Literary and Thematic Terms*, U.S.A.: Checkmark Books. Print.
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13.8 SUGGESTED READING

1. Abrams, M.H.(ed) *Norton Anthology*, London, UK.: W.W. Norton and Company. Print.
 2. Cuddon, J.A. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, London, UK.: Penguin.1976.Print.
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3. Quinn, Edward. *A Dictionary of Literary and Thematic Terms*, U.S.A., Checkmark Books. Print.

13.9 TERMINAL AND MODEL QUESTIONS

1. Name any five elements of autobiography.
2. Mention three difficulties that a writer has to face while writing a biography.
3. Discuss the various rhetorical techniques in detail.
4. Discuss any biography *or* autobiography that you have read.
5. Discuss the effect of industrial revolution on the development of novel.
6. Do you think that novel as a genre of literature is a modern phenomenon?