Semester-II **BAEL (N)-102**

UNDERSTANDING LITERATURE

UTTARAKHAND OPEN UNIVERSITY

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UNDERSTANDING LITERATURE

CONTENTS

UNIT 1 WHAT IS LITERATURE?

1.1 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 the major tendencies in literature are, 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.

1.2 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

1.3 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.

1.3.1 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).

1.3.2 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 surosh 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.

1.3.3 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.

1.3.4 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 paradisal 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

1.4 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.

1.4.1 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'.

1.4.1.1 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.

1.4.1.2 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 Ragghu as a 'classicist' and Tagore's Tara as a romantic?

1.4.1.3 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-illusive 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.

1.4.2 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.

1.4.3 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: Adwaita, Dwaita, 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.

1.5 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.

1.6 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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1.8 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 2 READING LITERATURE

2.1 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.

2.2 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 movement2.3 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.

2.3.1 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.

2.3.2 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.

2.3.3 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.

2.3.3.1 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.

2.3.3.2 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.

2.3.4 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'!

2.3.5 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 (10^{th}-11^{th} 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

1.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

2.4 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.

2.4.1 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 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 Abhinavgupta 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):

Sthaayi-bhaav	*Rasa*
1. Love of sexes (rati रति)	the erotic (shringaar श्रृंगार)
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 tranquill (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. Stupefaction (moha मोह) 11. Remembrance (smriti स्मृति) 13. Steadfastness (dhriti धृति) 13. Shame (vreeda/lajja व्रीड़ा / लज्जा) 14. Fickleness (chapalata 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.

2.4.2 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.

2.4.3 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-vilaap in Kalidas's Raghuvansh or Ram's vilaap 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.

2.4.4 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 vyabhichaari bhav?
3. Why did the general practice of arousing pathos came 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

2.5 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.

2.6 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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2.8 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 3 PROSE

3.1 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.

3.2 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

3.3 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.

3.3.1 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 of 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* (5^{th} 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 Burnry 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.

3.3.2 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, Plutatch 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 biographers, 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.

3.3.3 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.

3.3.4.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 Pussy. 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.

3.4 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.

3.4.1 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.” Abrahms 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.

3.4.2 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."

3.4.3 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)

3.4.4 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 *Rhetotic,* 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

3.5 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.

3.5.1 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 & in 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.

3.5.2 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.

3.6 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

3.7 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.

3.8 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.

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

3.9 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?

UNIT 4 THE BEGINNING OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

4.12 References

4.13 Suggested Reading

4.1 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.

4.2 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.

4.3 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.

4.3.1 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.

4.3.2 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."

4.4 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.

4.4.1 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.

4.4.2 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 Gawayn 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.'

4.4.2 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.

4.5 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.

4.5.1 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.

4.5.2 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.

4.6 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.

4.7 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.

4.8 GLOSSARY

CHARACTERIZATION: Characterization is the act of creating and developing a character. A writer uses *direct characterization* when he or she states a character's traits explicitly. *Indirect*

characterization occurs when the writer reveal's character by some other means. When using indirect characterization, 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 Creseyde, 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.

4.9 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

4.10 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.

4.11 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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4.13 SUGGESTED READING

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4.14 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 5 LITERATURE AFTER CHAUCER: FROM THE END OF THE MIDDLE AGES TO RENAISSANCE

5.1 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.

5.2 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.

5.3 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.

5.4 SOME IMPORTANT MOVEMENTS OF THE PERIOD

5.4.1 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.

5.4.2 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.

5.4.3 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 enry 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.

5.5 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.

5.5.1 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. Spencer'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 1) 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 a s 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.

5.5.2 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 Hobyin 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.

5.5.2.1 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 Bishope 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.

5.5.2.2 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.

5.5.2.3 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.

5.5.3 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 *Elkerlijk* 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.)

5.3.5.1 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.

5.3.5.2 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 (*Phillis,* 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.

5.3.5.3 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 b1590s) 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.*

5.6 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 Euphues meaning "graceful and witty." It was a peculiar manner of English prose style which was popularized after two prose romances by John Lyly, *Euphues: 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. Euphues was fashionable in the 1580s, especially in the Elizaberthan 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 tragedy that has a potentially tragic background. For example, the function of the Porter is Macbeth acts as a comic relief in the tragedy *Macbeth.*

5.7 LET US SUM UP

- In this unit you got an insight into the major literary and historical movements, namely Humanism, Renaissance and 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.

5.8 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?

5.9 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

5.10 REFERENCES

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.

5.11 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.

5.12 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 6 - 17TH & 18TH CENTURY LITERATURE

6.1 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.

6.2 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.

6.3 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.

6.3.1. 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 1. 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 Elizabeth1, 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 Stuat) 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.

6.3.2 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 dissidants 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.

6.4 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.

6.4.1 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*.

6.4.1.1 Metaphysical School of Poetry

The term "Metaphysical" in poetry was first used by Dr. Johnson, who borrowed it from Dryden's phase 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.

6.4.2 The Puritan Writers

6.4.2.1 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 interpritations 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).*

6.4.2.2 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.

6.5 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.

6.6 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 in1714, the throne passed to James I, who ruled over a small principality in Hanover, Germany. James ascended the English throne as George 1, as the first monarch of the House of Hanover.

6.7 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.

6.7.1 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.

6.7.1.1 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.

6.7.1.1.1 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.

6.7.1.1.2 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 in 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'. Swife 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.

6.7.1.1.3 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.*

6.7.1.2 PERIODICALS AND PERIODICAL ESSAYS

6.7.1.2.1 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.

6.7.1.2.2 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 April1709. 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 newsparers 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.

6.7.1.3 The Advent of the Precursors to Romanticism

As we have read earlier, the Neo Classical writers were highly inspired by the classists and emulated their style in their writings. As they followed the classists, 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 laboureres 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.

6.8 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 e3ssay is printed in a magazine or a newspaper, it is called a **Periodical essay.**

6.9 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.

6.10 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?

6.11 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.

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

6.13 SUGGESTED READING

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6.14 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 7 THE ROMANTIC AND THE VICTORIAN PERIODS

7.1 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.

7.2 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

7.3 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 classists 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.

7.3.1 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.

7.3.2 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.

7.4 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 Gothe. 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".

7.5 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* in1798 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.

7.5.1 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 adict. 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 succumed 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."

7.5.2 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 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 Austin, 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.

7.6 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 WilliamWordsworth challenged the distinction in his *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). Wordsworth proposed that a "language near to the language of men" was as approprite for poetry as for prose. This idea bore weight for some time but was later condemned by the Modernist poets went against it by saying that there was no such thing as prosiac.

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.

7.7 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	*Prometheus Unbound*
William Wordsworth	*Songs of Experience*
S.T. Coleridge	*Hyperion*
P.B. Shelley	*The Prelude*
John Keats	*Biographia Literaria*]

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

7.8 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	*Songs of Experience*
	William Wordsworth	*The Prelude*
	S.T. Coleridge	*Biographia Literaria*
	P.B. Shelley	*Prometheus Unbound*
	John Keats	*Hyperion*

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.

7.9 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.

7.10 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."

7.11 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.

7.12 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.

7.13 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.

7.13.1 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 Tennison, 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 Barrette, 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 Scouts 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 inspitarion for the poets of the twentieth century.

7.13.2 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 Dicken'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.

7.13.3 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 Stuarl Mill, *The Idea of a University Defined* by John Henry Newman and *Studies in the History of Renaissance* by Walter Pater.

7.13.4 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 Whig Pinero's *The Second Mrs. Tanquerey* 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.

7.14 MAJOR MOVEMENTS

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

7. 14.1. 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.

7.14.2. 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.

7.14.3. 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.

7.14.4. 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).

7.14.5. 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.

7.14.6. 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.

7.15 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.

7.16 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

7.17 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

7.18 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 Classists 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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7.21 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 8

TWENTIETH CENTURY LITERATURE AND SOME MAJOR MODERN MOVEMENTS

8.1 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.

8.2 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

8.3 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 undergoing 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.

8.4 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 theses 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.

8.4.1 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 Harod 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.*

8.4.2 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 ware 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.

8.4.3 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 Flie*s 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 Burghess, 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 Durelle who besides being an ace

novelist and a poet has also written a considerable number of travelogues. Anoita 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.

8.5 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 conventionalal 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 Allen Poe who were also associated with movements like symbolism and aestheticism. The classical novel *Against Nature* by Joris Karl Huymans 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 1 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 Rienhard, 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 Antoniioni 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 Millett'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, finally 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 "absurdists" 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 *Ripostes;* 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 Nietzche 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 is a non traditional way. Post Modernism owes its origin to French intellectuals like Jean Francois Lyotard and Jean Baudrillard. The progressive thinking of Jacques Derrida, Michael Foucault and Ronald Barths 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 Vladmir Nabokov, William Gaddis, 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 Falkner. 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 of the unconscious in artistic creativity. Surrealism owes its origin to the French poet and critic Andre 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 2os and the 30s were the dramatists Jean Cocteau, the poet Paul Eluard, the painter Salvador Dali and the filmmaker Luis Banuel. Like Dada, surrealism proved to be more significant in its general impact than in the specific achievements 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 importance influence on contemporary literature and film.

8.6 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

8.7 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.

8.8 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?

8.9 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)

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8.11 SUGGESTED READING

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8.12 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 9 SOME WORLD LITERARY MOVEMENTS AND TRENDS

9.1 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 literal and cultural movements that have taken place in the English speaking countries of the world excepting the British Isles.

9.2 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.

9.3 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 becomes 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.s 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 Cisnero's *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 1 to the beginning of Great Depression. In Europe, they are generally known as the 'generation of 1914' for the year World War 1 began. In France, the country in which many expatriates settles, 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 kmown 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 intutive 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 Alcot, Henry david Thoreau and Nathaniel Hawthorne. The Transcendentalists also took out a quarterly journal *The Dial,* which served as a vehicle of transcendental thought.

9.4 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 werew 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 "dhyan" 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 Nthe 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.

9.5 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.

9.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

QI. Match the following:

Col. A	Col. B
Emerson	*Leaves of Grass*

Thoreau	*Moby Dick*
Melville	*Walden*
Whitman	*Essays and Poems*

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.

9.7 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*

9.8 REFERENCES

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

9.9 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.

9.10 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 10 THE LANGUAGE OF POETRY

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Poetry is among the most complex art forms evolved by the human race. It uses words in unique ways to create emotional responses, sometime using those words in vastly different ways than we do in ordinary speech. It's also one of the oldest art forms: no one really knows when the first poem was composed-just that it was thousands of years ago.

Sometimes poetry is formal, following strict rules of language and form. Sometimes it is wild and loose; you know this if you have attended a poetry reading. Poetry can express love, hate, joy, grief, anger, confusion and humor. Sometimes it is easy to understand –"Twinkle Twinkle little star, how I wonder what you are"-but sometimes it is too deep and tricky you can read it three, four, five, sixty times and still struggle to interpret its meaning.

May be you have read poetry your whole life; maybe you are coming across a poem for the first time, may be you just want to learn something about it; or maybe you have an urge to start scribbling verses yourself. No matter which of these applies to you, you will find something of value in this unit; its sections will help you form a working definition of poetry that makes sense to you.

10.2 OBJECTIVES

The aim of this unit is to make you well acquainted with the ins and outs of various literary devices and basic terms and elements of poetry which constitute a poem. After reading this unit you all will be able to-

- Understand how to read a poem
- Understand the term Prosody
- Know the terms like rhyme and rhythm in a poem
- Understand syllable, foot. Feet and Meter in poem
- Understand various Poetic Devices
- Understand various Stanza forms used in poetry.

10.3 HOW TO READ A POEM

I would love to start with a beautiful conversation between Boswell and Dr. Johnson

BOSWELL: What is Poetry?

JOHNSON: Why, Sir, It is far easier to say what it is not.

Most of us are of Johnson's opinion. We know it when we see it but we can't describe it. *The Oxford English Dictionary* says poetry is 'composition in verse or metrical language which is 'the expression of beautiful or elevated thought, imagination or feeling'. it may be true to some beautiful poems but not all verse is poetry, as Johnson himself pointed out with these lines

I put my hat upon my head
` And walked into the strand,
And there I met another man
With his hat in his hand.

Not all verse is poetry and conversely, not all poems are verse. Some hardly seem to be the expression of beautiful and elevated thought at all.

Whether we want to admit it or not, it can be scary or at least daunting to face a page on which a few words have been arranged into something called poem. We know where we stand with sentences and stanzas, but everything can feel a bit wobbly when words are shaped into others, less familiar, forms and patterns. It seems hard to know where to start. In various section we will focus on the techniques of meter and rhythm. For now, here are a few ideas to help in your approach to a new poem.

10.3.1 USE YOUR VOICE

With a few exceptions, poems are meant to be spoken. The human voice breathes both life and meaning into the words. A poem that is difficult to understand on paper may start to make a lot more sense once you read it out loud. Sentences that appear disjointed may piece together smoothly when heard by your ear.

Play with the speed that you speak: does slowing down or speeding up help you hear the rhymes more easily? May be you cannot hear any rhymes, but reciting a string of words that all start with the same letter sounds good. Do you find yourself falling into a rhythm as you

speak, emphasizing certain words or syllables? Does the poem sound better if you pause at the end of each line, or carry on until you reach the end of a sentence?

10.3.2 READ CLOSELY

Don't skip any line. Read the poem from beginning to end, even if it is slow going. Take your time and don't rush .Poetry can be deep and dense with layers of meanings that may not be revealed on a first read.

Read with a pencil in hand .Writing your thoughts down really helps you engage with the poem. Underline words, circle them. Jot down questions in the margin. Put an asterisk next to a line you really like or a question mark next to one that makes no sense. Mark where the sentences finish.

10.3.3 FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHILE READING A POEM

The Title- Start with the poem's title. Some titles give an accurate preview of the poem's subject but others possess a less obvious meaning. Keep the title in mind as you read *through the poem.*

The Poet- If you recognize his or her name .take a few seconds to think about what you know about him or her. Did you like his other poems? Does he/she write in a formal or informal style?

The poem's Appearance- Observe how the poem looks on the page. Are there many breaks? Does the poet use a lot of white space or do the words crash into one another?

Context- A poem isn't written in a vacuum. While some poems hold clear meanings on their own, others gain more power when applying external factors. Was the poem written during war time? Was the poet a member of a minority group? Did he or she write in secret? Or for a large audience or purpose?

The Speaker- Who is the speaker? Even if the poem is written in first person, the speaker isn't necessarily the poet. Many poet use a persona- an imaginary identity to write. Can you imagine the speaker in real life?

Tone- What is the attitude of the poem? Is it lighthearted and humorous? Does it drip with sarcasm? Or anger?

Patterns and Symbols- Look for patterns. Are there sounds, words, or lines that repeat? Does the poem circle back on itself at any point? Are there repeating motifs or symbols?

Vocabulary- If you encounter a word you don't recognize, don't move on. Remember: every single word counts in a poem. Take a moment to look p the word's definition. It has several potential meaning; consider which one fits best within the poem's context.

One way to understand a poem's meaning is to strip it down to the essentials. If the language is flowery, we can take away the adjectives. If there are metaphors or figurative language, translate the phrases into plain language. Paraphrase the poem to reveal a basic plot or point. Then use that as a framework to build the poem back into shape again, adding layers of language until it returns to the form in which the poet presented it. Read it again, and you may find that parts of the poem now spring to life in ways they didn't on your initial read.

10.4 ENGLISH PROSODY

It is originated from the Greek word 'Prosodia' which means "tune". Though Prosody is an integrated unit but in simple words we can say" The systematic study of versification, covering the principles of metre, rhythm, rhyme and stanza forms: or a particular system of versification."In linguistics, the term is applied to patterns of stress and intonation in ordinary speech. Prosody in the literary sense is also known as Metrics.

Traditional prosody had three components: (I) rhythmics, or theory of rhythm (rhythmicity as a perceptual mode; the kinds of rhythmic forms and their modes of combination), which includes metrics, meter being simply one type of rhythm; (2) Sonics or Harmonics, or theory of sound-patterning, its types (particularly rhyme) and effects and (3) Strophics, the theory of the forms poetry may assume above the level of the line. Unfortunately, however, these components-meter, sound patterning (including rhyme) , and stanza-were treated as if they were independent and virtually unrelated topics. Indeed, enormous effort has been wasted in the past producing studies in only one area which duplicate work in other areas, or use inconsistent terminology or methods, or fail to integrate such work within a wider field theory of verse structure. Of the three components, rhythmics (metrics) historically has been far more extensively discussed than the other two; indeed, many critics think of metrics and prosody as synonymous.

Hence we can simplify the statement by saying “that part of grammar which deals with laws governing the structure of verse is caIled prosody. It encompasses the study of all the eIenments of language that contribute towards acoustic or rhythmic effects, chiefly in poetry but also in prose.” Ezra Pound called Prosody "the articulation of the total sound of a poem".

10.4.1 PROSODICAL DEVICES

We need to understand the basics of certain terms in a sequence if we want to be well acquainted with the prosody and its mechanics. A student needs to understand it in simplest way so that he or she can explore it further. After working with Indian students in classes, it was found that they generally understand it in the sequence of syllable system, feet, introduction of basic meter form, scansion and deciding the meter type finally.

10.4.2 SYLLABLE SYSTEM

Let us try to understand it in simple terms without diving into deep and complex system of Linguistics and Phoetics.We know that the smallest unit of sound is called phoneme ,the sound of ‘p’,’t’,’m’ can be the example. These are either vowel sounds or Consonant sounds. Words are formed with the combination of vowel and consonant sounds. Whenever a consonant is joined with a vowel sound there is a noticed rise or fall in speech system or sound of the word. This rise or fall is caused by the vowel sounds. The rise of sound is called accented syllable and the fall is call unaccented syllable. We can also call them stressed and unstressed syllable. Now this all is represented through the following symbols

Stressed Syllable -- /

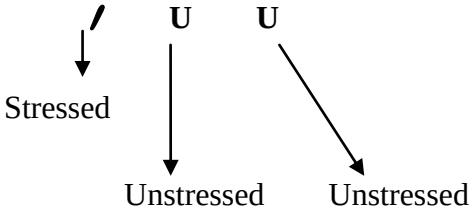
Unstressed Syllable- U

The number of syllables in a word decides whether it will be one syllabic word or two or three or more. For instance 3 syllabic word

The word Messenger can be broken into three syllables - me/ssen/ger

Each arrow points the vowel sound i.e. the syllable,

If we utter the word we will feel the first arrow represent stressed syllable and the rest of the two arrows represent the unstressed syllables. The stress pattern of the word can be described as –ME SSEN GER



To conclude in simple language we can conclude that there are as many syllables as there are vowels separated by consonants.

10.4.3 BASIC FEET

The basic unit for counting accents in poetry is called a foot. It is also called the smallest unit of meter in poetry. It is a pattern of phonetically stressed and unstressed syllable. Each foot has either two or three syllables in it. There are four basic feet. The names of these four feet are Greek because we trace one system of poetic scansion back to the Greeks. Here are the basic four feet:

a) Iambic - U / (Unstressed -Stressed)

b) Trochaic - / U (Stressed - Unstressed)

c) Anapestic U U / (unstressed-unstressed-stressed)

d) Dactylic / U U (stressed-unstressed-unstressed)

There are also two auxiliary feet that are sometimes necessary to use in scanning a line of poetry:

a) Spondaic / / (stressed-stressed)

b) Pyrrhic U U (unstressed-unstressed)

There are two more feet, but they are used so infrequently in scansion, you really do need not to worry about to using them. They both are three syllabic feet. They are called:

a) Amphibrach U / U

b) Amphimacer / U /

Syllable stress metres got established in English in the poetry of Geoffrey Chaucer (1340?-1400). After him, for about two centuries the syllable-stress metre fell into disuse or was misunderstood. It was only towards the end of the 16th century syllable-stress metres got re-established.

10.4.4 RHYTHM AND METER

Rhythm and Meter are two often confused terms and used interchangeably; we must understand the difference between these two. Rhythm refers to the way the sound of poem moves in a general sense either in part or through its whole length. In all sustained spoken English we sense a rhythm; that is a recognizable although varying pattern in the beat of the stresses, or accents in the stream of speech sound. In simple language we can understand the stress pattern which occurs in the whole length of a line or in all the lines internally.

Meter is more specific and refers to a set pattern which recurs line by line. It is the recurrence, in regular units, of a prominent feature in the sequence of speech sounds of a language. The study of the theory and practice of meter is called Metrics. There is considerable dispute about the most valid or useful way to analyze and classify English meters. Traditionally theses measures are made by one of four different systems depending on what they count. They might count:

1. Syllables, which is the segments of sounds that make up individual words (syllabics)

2. Quantity, that is the length of varying syllables (quantitative)

3. Beats, that is where the stress or accent falls on different syllables in normal speaking patterns (accentual or strong stress)

4. The number and pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables (accentual-syllabic or stress syllabic).

When a poem measures its lines by one or other of these systems it is said to have metre. Now in order to decide meter we need to look for the foot used in the lines. A foot is the combination of strong stress and the associated weak stresses or stresses which make up the recurrent metric unit of a line. After deciding foot through the stress count we decide how many total foot are there and that is called feet count (plural of foot).According to the number of feet count we decide the length of the line by using the following system:

1. Monometer- A line of poetry with only one foot

2. Dimeter- A line with two feet

3. Trimeter- A line with three feet

4. Tetrameter- A line with four feet

5. Pentameter- A line with five feet

6. Hexameter- A line with six feet

7. Heptameter- A line with seven feet

8. Octameter- A line with eight feet

Now as we have already discussed about the feet and length of lines, the next step we have to understand is how to decide meter. We need to understand the process of Scansion now.

The practice of analysing, or scanning, lines of verse in order to determine their rhythmical or more usually metrical features is called Scansion. To scan a passage of verse is to go through it line by line, analyzing the component feet, and also indicating where any major pauses in the phrasing fall within a line. Here is a scansion, signified by conventional symbols, of the first five lines from John Keats' Endymion (1818). The passage was chosen because it exemplifies a flexible and variable rather than a highly regular metrical pattern.

U / U / U / U / U / U
A thíng | of beau | ty is |a joy | for e ver: | (1)

U / U / U / U / U / U
Its lóve| li ness | in créas | es; // ít | will név er (2)

/ U U / U U U / U /
Páss in | to nóth | ing něss, | // but stíl | will kéep | (3)

U / U / U U U / U /
A bow | ér quí | et for | ůs, // ánd ||å sleep (4)

/ U U / U / U / U ` /
Full of | sweet dreams, | and health, | and qui | et breathing. | (5)

The prevailing meter is iambic pentameter. As in all fluent verse, however, there are many variations upon the basic iambic foot; these are sometimes called "substitutions.". Thus:

1. The closing feet of lines 1, 2, and 5 end with an extra unstressed syllable, and are said to have a ***feminine ending***. In lines 3 and 4, the closing feet, because they are standard iambs, end with a stressed syllable and arc said to have ***masculine endings***.

2. In lines 3 and 5, the opening iambic feet have been "inverted" to form Trochees. (This initial position is the most common place for inversions in Iambic verse.)
3.The second foot is marked in line 2, and the third foot of line 3 and line 4, as pyrrhics (two unstressed syllables);

these help to give Keats' verses their rapid movement. This is a procedure in scansion about which metric analysts disagree: some will feel enough of a metric beat to mark all these feet as iambs; others will mark still other feet (tor example, the third foot of line 1) as pyrrhics also, and some metrists prefer to use symbols measuring two degrees of strong stress, and will indicate a difference in the feet, however, that these are differences only in nuance; analysts agree the prevailing pulse of Keats' versification is iambic throughout, and that despite many variations, the felt norm is of five stresses in the verse line.

We can however clearly understand the different meters through the following examples and scansion

1. **Iambic** (the noun is "iamb"'): an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed

Syllable.

U / U / U / U / U /
Thě cúr fěw tólls | thě knéll | of pár tỉng dáy. |

(Thomas Gray, "*Elegy Witten in a Country Churchyard*")

2. **Anapaestic** (the noun is anapaest"): two unstressed syllables followed by a stressed syllable.

U U / U U / U U / U U /
Thĕ As sýr | ản cắme dówn | like ă wólf | on thĕ fold.

(Lord Byron, "*The Destruction of Sennacherib*")

3. **Trochaic** (the noun is "trochee): a stressed followed by an unstressed syllable.

/ U / U / U / U / U
Thére thĕy | áre, mў | fif tў | mến ănd | wó mĕn. |

(Robert Browning, "*One Word More*"'

Most trochaic lines lack the final unstressed syllable--in the technical terms such lines, or any verse lines that lack the final syllable, are called **Catalectic**.

4. Dactylic (the noun s "dactyl"): a stressed syllable followed by two unstressed syllables.

/ U U / U U
Éve, with hĕr | bás kĕt, wăs |

/ U U / U U
Déep in thĕ | bélls ănd grăs.|

(Ralph Hodgson, "*Eve"*)

Iambs and anapests, since the strong stress is at the end, are called "rising meter': trochees and dactyls, with the strong stress at the beginning, are called "falling meter." lambs and trochees, having two syllables, are called "duple meter": anapests and dactyls, having three syllables, are called "triple meter."

Two other feet are often distinguished by special names, although they occur in English meter only as occasional variants from standard feet:

Spondaic (the noun is spondee"): two successive syllables with approximately equal strong stresses, as in each of the first two feet of this line:

/ / / / U / U / U /
Góod stróng | thíck stú | pĕ fý | ing ín cĕnse smóke. |

(Browning, *The Bishop Orders His Tomb*)

Pyrrhic (the noun is also "pyrrhic"): a foot composed of two successive syllables with approximately equal light stresses, as in the second and fourth feet in this **line:**

/ U U U U / U U U / U
Mý wăy | is tỏ | bĕ gín | with thĕ | bĕ gín ning |

(Byron, *Don Juan*)

This latter term is used only infrequently. Some traditional metrists deny the existence of a true pyrrhic, on the grounds that the prevailing metrical accent- in the above instance, iambic- always imposes a slightly stronger stress on one of the two syllables.

10.4.5 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*, *drain* 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)

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.

10.5 POETICAL 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.

10.5.1 CONCEIT

A *conceit* is an elaborate, improbable comparison between two very unlike things to create an imaginative connection between them. As a result, conceits are often mentioned in connection with simile, extended metaphors, and allegories since they also use comparisons or symbolic imagery. It's a device commonly used in poetry.

The word *conceit* is connected to *concept*. It is originated from an Italian word 'Concetto'.During the Renaissance, it referred to an imaginative, whimsical expression because of its poetic use. Alternatively, the term *conceit* also refers to an unlikely situation or premise that propels the narrative in a text.

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".

10.5.2 IMAGERY

Imagery (‘making of likenesses') the terms image and imagery have many connotations and meanings. Imagery as a general term covers the use of language to represent objects, actions, feelings, thoughts, ideas, states of mind and any sensory or extra-sensory experience. An ‘Image' does not necessarily mean a mental picture.

In the first place we may distinguish between the literal, the perceptual and the conceptual. These lines from Robert Lowell's *Our Lady of Walsingham* illustrate the basic differences:

There once the penitents took off their shoes

And then walked barefoot the remaining mile;

And the small trees, a stream and hedgerows file

Slowly along the munching English lane,

Like cows to the old shrine, until you lose

Track of your dragging pain.

The stream flows down under the druid tree,

Shiloah's whirlpools gurgle and make glad

The castle of God.

The first two lines are a literal image (without figurative language) which may or may not convey a visual image also. The phrase ‘hedgerows file slowly' is a perceptual image because of the metaphorical use of the world 'file'. The phrase 'castle of God' is conceptual. One can hardly visualize it but one may have an idea of it.

Many mages (but by no means all) are conveyed by figurative language as in metaphor, simile, synecdoche, onomatopoeia and metonymy. An image may be visual (pertaining to the eye), olfactory (smell), tactile (touch), auditory (hearing), gustatory (taste), abstract (in which case it will appeal to what may be described as the intellect) and kinesthetic (pertaining to the sense of movement and bodily effort)

10.5.3 METAPHOR

A broad and complex area, most simply it can be described as a figure which expresses one thing in terms of another by suggesting a likeness between them. There are many different kinds of metaphor, so embedded that it can be hard to remember that they are figure. For example, if someone is called ‘bright as button’ their ‘brightness’ is being emphasized by the association with a shiny button. In other words, it can be said that a metaphor is an implied comparison. It makes a comparison between things or ideas that are generally unlike.

The major difference between a simile and a metaphor is that a simile uses words such as ‘like’ and ‘as’ to make a comparison whereas a metaphor does not. Another difference is that a metaphor is an implied comparison; on the other hand, a simile is a direct comparison.

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. Here is a more complex instance from the poet Stephen Spender, in which he applies several metaphoric terms to the eye as it scans a landscape:

Eye, gazelle, delicate wanderer,

Drinker of horizon's fluid line.

It should be noted that in these examples we can distinguish two elements, the metaphorical term and the subject to which it is applied. In a widely adopted usage, I. A. Richards introduced the name tenor for the subject ("my love in the altered line from Burns, and "eye"

in Spenders lines), and the name vehicle for the metaphorical term itself ("rose'" in Burns, and the three words "gazelle," "wanderer." and "drinker" in Spender). In an implicit metaphor, the tenor is not itself specified, but only implied. If one were to say, while discussing someone's death, "That reed was too frail to survive the storms of its sorrows." the situational and verbal context of the term "reed" indicates that it is the vehicle for an implicit tenor, a human being, while "storm" is the vehicle for an aspect of a specified tenor, "sorrows." Those aspects, properties, or common associations of a vehicle which, in a given context, apply to a tenor are called by Richards the grounds of a metaphor.

All the metaphoric terms, or vehicles, cited so far have been nouns, but other parts of speech may also be used metaphorically. The metaphoric use of a verb occurs in Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice, V. i. 54, "How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank"; and the metaphoric use of an adjective occurs in Andrew Marvell's "The Garden" (1681):

Annihilating all that's made

To a green thought in a green shade.

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 wreckful 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.

Examples- The leg of a table

The heart of the matter etc.

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.

10.5.4. ALLITERATION

Alliteration ('repeating and playing upon the same letter') A figure of speech in which consonants, especially at the beginning of words, or stressed syllables, are repeated. It is a very old device indeed in English verse (older than rhyme) and is common in verse generally. It is used occasionally in prose. In Old English poetry alliteration was a continual and essential part of the metrical scheme and until the late Middle Ages was often used thus. However, alliterative verse becomes increasingly rare after the end of the 15th century and alliteration-like assonance, consonance and onomatopoeia - tends more to be reserved for the achievement of the special effect.

There are many classic examples, like Coleridge's famous description of the sacred river Alph in Kubla Khan:

Five miles meandering with a mazy motion

Alliterative meter is an essential feature of Germanic prosody. Alliteration was a basic part of the structure. Nearly all Old English verse is heavily alliterative, and the pattern is fairly standard with either two or three stressed syllables in each line alliterating, which can be easily noticed in the great Anglo Saxon Epic Beowulf. In succeeding centuries the systematic pattern is gradually loosened. Many of the Medieval Mystery Plays were written in rough alliterative Verse.

The use of alliteration dwindled steadily during the 15th century and the only notable poet to make much use of it in Tudor times was John Skelton. Shakespeare used it occasionally in his sonnets. An example is the repetitions of the *s, th,* and *w* consonants in Shakespeare's Sonnet XXX:

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.

It was not until late in the I9th century that Gerard Manley Hopkins revived the alliterative tradition. He experimented a great deal. These lines from *Spring* suggest how:

Nothing is so beautiful as spring -

When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush;

Thrush's eggs look little low heavens, and thrush

Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring

The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing;

Later Ezra Pound also experimented with it. In 1912 he published *Ripostes*, which contained a fine rendering of the Old English elegiac lyric *The Seafarer*.In Modern age other poets have shown mastery of this form, among them W.H Auden and C. Day Lewis made skilful use of Alliterative measures.

10.5.5 CONSONANCE AND 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 *honour,*
As he left them there, as he left them there.

Assonance sometimes called ‘vocalic rhyme', it consists of the repetition of similar vowel sounds usually close together, to achieve a particular effect of euphony. There is a kind of drowsy sonority in the following lines from Tennyson's *Lotos-Eaters* which is assonantal:

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak:
The Lotos blows by every winding creek:
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone,
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-dust
is blown.

Thus in simple words we can say that 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....

10.6 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.*

10.7 FIGURES OF SPEECH

10.7.1 SYMBOL

The word symbol drives from the Greek verb *Symballein*, 'to throw together', and its noun *symbolon*, 'mark''emblem 'token' or 'sign'. It is an object, animate or inanimate, which represents or 'stands for' something else. As Coleridge put it, a symbol is characterized by a translucence of the special [i.e. the species] in the individual. A symbol differs from an allegorical sign that it has a real existence, whereas an allegorical sign is arbitrary.

Scales for example, symbolize justice; the orb and sceptre, monarchy and rule; a dove, peace; a goat, lust; the lion, strength and courage: the rose, beauty; the lily, purity; the Stars and stripes, America and its States; the Cross, Christianity and the swastika crooked Cross) Nazi Germany and Fascism etc.

Actions and gestures are also symbolic. The clenched fist symbolizes aggression. Beatıng of the breast signifies remorse. Arms raised denote surrender. Hands clasped and raised suggest

suppliance. A slow upward movement of the head accompanied by a closing of the eyes means, in Turkish, 'no'. Moreover, most religious and fertility rites are rich with symbolic movements and gestures, especially the Roman Mass.

A literary symbol combines an image with a concept (words them- selves are a kind of symbol). It may be public or private, universal or local. They exist, so to speak.

In literature an example of a public or universal symbol is a journey into the underworld (as in the work of Virgil, Dante and James Joyce) and a return from it. Such a journey may be an interpretation of a spiritual experience, a dark night of the soul and a kind of redemptive odyssey. Examples of private symbols are those that recur in the works of W. B. Yeats: the sun and moon, a tower a mask, a tree, a winding stair and a hawk.

Dante's *Divine Comedy* is structurally symbolic. In *Macbeth* there is a recurrence of the blood image symbolizing guilt and violence. In *Hamlet* weeds and disease symbolize corruption and decay. In *King Lear* clothes symbolize appearances and authority; and the m storm scene in this play may be taken as symbolic of cosmic and domestic chaos to which unaccommodated man' is exposed. The poetry of Blake and Shelley is heavily marked with symbols. The shooting of the albatross in Coleridge's Rime of the Ancient Mariner is symbolic of all sin and stands for a lack of respect for 1ife and for a proper humility towards the natural order. In his Four Quartets T. S. Eliot makes frequent use of the symbols of Fire and the Rose. To a lesser extent symbolism is an essential part of Eliot's Ash Wednesday (especially Part lll) and The Waste Land.

10.7.2 HYPERBOLE AND UNDERSTATEMENT

Hyperbole (Gk 'overcasting') A figure of speech which contains an exaggeration for emphasis. For example, Hotspur's rant in Henry IV, part I:

> By heaven methinks it were an easy leap
> To pluck bright honour from the pale-fac' d moon,
> Or dive into the bottom of the deep,
> Where fathom line could never touch the ground,
> And pluck up drowned honour by the locks.

Hyperbole was very common in Tudor and Jacobean drama, and in heroic drama. It is an essential part of burlesque. There are plentiful examples in writers of comic fiction; in

Dickens, especially. Everyday instances, of which there are many, are: I haven't seen you for ages'; 'as old as the hills' terrible weather, and so on.

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".

10.7.3 METONYMY

Metonymy (Greek, 'a change of name') A figure of speech in which name of an attribute or a thing is substituted for the thing itself or we may say 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. For example "The Stage' tor the theatrical profession; "The Crown' for the monarchy; "Hollywood" for the film industry; "Milton" can signify the writings of Milton ("I have read all of Milton"); "The Bench for the judiciary; Dante for his works.

Synecdoche (Greek for 'taking up together') A figure of speech in which 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."*

10.7.4 PERSONIFICATION

The impersonation or embodiment of some quality or abstraction; the attribution of human qualities to inanimate objects. Personification is inherent in many languages through the use of gender, and it appears to be very frequent in all literature especially in poetry. 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.

10.7.5 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.

10.7.6 PARADOX

Paradox (Greek for 'beside/beyond opinion') originally a paradox was merely a view which contradicted accepted opinion. By round about the middle of the 16th century the word had acquired the commonly accepted meaning it now has: an apparently self-contradictory (even absurd) statement which, on closer inspection, is found to contain a truth reconciling the conflicting opposites. Basically, two kinds may be distinguished: (a) particular or 'local'; (b) general or 'structural'. Examples of the first are short statements which are compact and seem to be very clever and amusing. - Such as Hamlet's line: 'I must be cruel only to be kind'; Milton's description of God: 'Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear'.

A structural paradox is one which is integral to, say, a poem. The works of the metaphysical poets, especially Donne and Marvell, abound in them. In fact Donne has been regarded as the first major English poet to develop the possibilities of paradox as a fundamental structural device which sustains the dialectic and argument of a poem.

Marvell's poem The Garden depends on a central paradoxical idea. Other good instances are to be found in Milton's Lycidas; and in Paradise Lost Milton is concerned with that other general paradox at the centre of Christian belief: the *felix culpa*, or 'happy fault', how good grows from evil. In *An Essay on Man* Pope combined a general statement about the paradoxical nature and condition of man with a series of particular paradoxes:

Some critical theory goes so far as to suggest that the language of poetry is the language of paradox. This idea has been elaborated persuasively by, among others, Cleanth Brooks in his book The Well- Wrought Urn (1947)

10.7.7 OXYMORON

Oxymoron (Greek for 'Pointedly foolish') Incongruous and apparently contradictory words and meanings for a special effect. As in Lamb's celebrated remark: 'I like a smuggler. He is the only honest thief'. It is a common device, closely related to antithesis and paradox, especially in poetry, and is of considerable antiquity. There are many splendid instances in English poetry. It was particularly popular in the late 16th and during the 17th century. A famous example occurs in *Romeo* ***and Juliet,*** **when Romeo jests about love:**

> Here's much to do with hate, but more with love.
>
> Why then, O brawling love! O loving hate!

O anything! of nothing first create!

O heavy lightness! serious vanity!

Mis-shapen chaos of well-seeming forms!

Other well-known examples are Milton's description of hell in Paradise Lost:

No light, but rather darkness visible

And Pope's reference to man in Essay on Man:

Plac'd on this isthmus of a middle state,

A being darkly wise, and rudely great.

Goldsmith has some striking ones in *The Deserted Village*:

Where grey-beard mirth and smiling toil retired

The toiling pleasure sickens into pain

Other English poets who have used the figure extensively are Keats and Crashaw.

10.7.8 SIMILE AND 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 . 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;. ..

10.7.9 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).

10.7.9.1 Why writers use allegory

Allegories are a useful device for two reasons: sensitivity and clarity. Writers use allegories to distance themselves from subject matter that may be touchy or dangerous to speak of frankly. Instead of approaching the topic directly, they allude to it through the guise of a storied metaphor, which makes it easier and safer to discuss.

Additionally, allegories can aid understanding if the concept being conveyed is too abstract. The symbolism used in the story can give readers a concrete character to latch onto that might rep

Allegory spans many genres from philosophical, historical, religious, and political to children’s novelss. Here are some popular examples.

- John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*
- Franz Kafka, *Metamorphosis*
- Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*
- George Orwell, *Animal Farm*
- Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queen*

10.7.9.10 Allegory and related terms

Allegory versus Symbolism

An allegory is a complete story, while symbolism is a singular object that can assist an allegory. For example, in *Moby Dick*, the whale is a symbol of meaning, and the captain chasing after him is a parallel to mankind seeking after the meaning of life or religious understanding.

Allegory versus Fable and Parable

Fables and parables are both subcategories of allegory—every fable and parable is an allegory, but not every allegory is a fable or parable. The latter are generally short stories with hidden meanings. However, fables tend to anthropomorphize objects and animals, while parables are more realistic and describe everyday occurrences.

The popular fable The *Tortoise and the Hare* has human-like animals competing in a race. It's easy to determine that the tortoise symbolizes a patient and consistent work ethic, while the hare symbolizes an impatient, inconsistent work ethic. The message, then, is that being methodical and dedicated to a task, rather than relying on bravado and no plan, is the winning strategy.

A parable is a story that can have several meanings, and it's often difficult to decipher them without an explanation. *The Parable of The Sower* is a realistic story about a farmer planting seeds that might have several meanings—for example, it could be about the care with which someone does their job. Jesus explains, however, that the seeds represent the Gospel and the four soils in which the seeds do or don't grow represent people's different responses to the Gospel.

Allegory versus Metaphor

Both terms reference an idea that's not explicitly stated, but an allegory is a complete story, while a metaphor is a figure of speech. "His love was my anchor to this world" is a metaphor that describes someone's love as crucial to this person's existence. While metaphors aren't a means for telling a story, they can appear or be alluded to several times in a written work to flesh out the idea being told; this is known as an extended metaphor or conceit.

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.

10.8 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.

10.9 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

Prasad,B.A *Background to the study of English Literature*, New Delhi: Macmillan Publishers India Pvt Ltd.2007.Print

10.10 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?

3, what is a symbol? Explain its uses in Literature with example.

4. Explain Oxymoron in detail.

UNIT 11 FORMS OF POETRY

11.1 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.

11.2 OBJECIVES

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. Understand the basic structures of all major forms of poetry.
d. Give examples of each type.

11.3 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.

11.3.1 EPIC

An epic is a long narrative poem, on a grand scale, about the deeds of warriors and heroes. It is Polygonal,'heroic'story incorporating myth, legend, folk tale and history. Epics are often of national significance in the sense that they embody the history and aspirations of a nation in a lofty or grandiose manner.

Basically there are two kinds of epic: (a) Primary- also known as Oral or Primitive; (b) secondary- also known as Literary Epic. The first belong to the oral tradition and is thus composed orally and recited; only much later, in some cases, is it written down. The second is written down at the start.

Classic examples of the Epic in European literature The classic examples of the Epic in European literature are the Iliad and the Odyssey by the ancient Greek poet Homer, which

have served as models to all later Epic poets. Each is poet Homer, which have served as models to all later. Each of these great works is a long tale in verse, with famous heroes for its principal characters, and it weaves together into an artistic form the many legends of their exploits which were handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth in song and story.

The story of the lliad, for instance, existed as folklore before Homer collected its scattered fragments together to form a splendid whole. The events of the Epic may have been magnified by tradition and the poet's own imagination, but some of them undoubtedly belong to actual history, like the siege of Troy. The mighty warriors and princes who are the leading figures may really have existed, though in the poem they are given almost superhuman dimension. Their actions are often subject to the personal intervention of the gods, who preside over their destinies and form a separate group of characters, with their own lovers and rivalries, in almost every classical Epic. The supernatural and magical element is always prominent. The language of the poem is, of course, noble and exalted, as to befit the words and deeds of gods and heroes; it is in "the grand style" and makes no attempt to resemble common speech.

11.3.1.1 Convention of the Epic

Later poets followed the example of Homer, not only in the general plan of the Epic, but also in various matters of detail, such as the following:-

(a) The theme of the Epic is stated in the first few lines, accompanied by a prayer to the Muse. The statement of the theme is technically called the "proposition," and the prayer the "invocation." Virgil's Aeneid, which is an imitation of Homer's liad, and Millon's Paradise Lost, which follows the Aeneid, both begin with a clearly defined proposition and invocation. Milton's will serve as an example -

Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit

Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste

Brought Death into the world, and all our woe,

With loss of Eden, till one greater Man

Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,

Sing, Heavenly Muse...

b) The Epic employs certain conventional poetic devices such as the **Homeric Epithet** - a term or phrase, sometimes quite lengthy, applied again and again to a particular person, place, or thing – and the Homeric Simile, which, setting out to make a comparison between two similar objects develops into a piece of elaborate description, a word-picture, almost a short poem in itself, designed to capture the reader's imagination. A number of Homeric Epithets **"faint Homeric echoes,"** as the poet modestly calls them - occur in Tennyson's Morte D' Arthur: Sir Bedivere is always "the bold":"clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful," recurs in every reference to the arm which rises from the bosom of the lake; we notice the repetition of "the ripple washing in the reeds" with the "wild water lapping on the crag"; and so on. A fine example of the Homeric Simile is to be found in Matthew Arnold's Sohrab and Rustum. It compares Rustum, who does not know that it is his own son who lies dying before him, to an eagle unaware that a hunter has killed its mate. As when some hunter in the spring hath found

c) The action of the Epic is often controlled by supernatural agents. In Homer and Virgil these are the classical gods and goddesses. In the most ancient European epics the old Norse deities play a prominent part, but those of the Christian era can scarcely be said to provide a parallel, as the conception of one supreme, omnipotent God alters the whole scheme. What is important in these is not the exploits of one hero, but the triumph of a holy cause, the victory of the believers over the heathen, of good over evil. Supernatural agencies fight on both sides, but they are of a different order and have limited powers. The famous Italian epics of Ariosto and Tasso follow these lines. In Spenser's Faerie Queene, which we may regard as an epic, most of the characters are themselves personifications of good and evil qualities. In Milton's Paradise Lost, of course, there are only two human characters, and they are almost passive in the strife between the powers of Heaven and Hell. The classical deities, however, reappear, Curiously enough, in the Portuguese national epic, The Lusiad, describing Vasco da Gama's voyage to India.

d) The Epic contains a number of thrilling “episodes," such as the mustering of troops, battle, duels, wanderings, ordeals, and the like. In this respect they are all modelled upon Homer or Virgil.

e) The Epic is divided into books, usually twelve in to number, though the Iliad, and the Odyssey have in twenty-four books each. The reduced number was first adopted by Virgil, who was followed in this by later European writers. Spenser's Faerie Queene was planned in

twelve books, though never completed, and Paradise Lost was raised to that number from the original ten.

11.3.1.2 Moral purpose and other features

The moral purpose, as has been indicated above, is not prominent in the early Epic. In Homer and Virgil there is little beyond the appeal to patriotism and national pride. The Italian poet Tasso introduced the moral and didactic elements into his Jerusalem Delive red, completed in 1574. Spenser followed his example in the Faerie Queene, the avowed intention of which is "to fashion a Gentleman in virtuous and gentle discipline." The purpose of Milton's Paradise Lost is Ito "justify the ways of God to men." "The moral of the other poems," says Dr. Johnson, "is incidental and consequent; in Milton's only it is essential and intrinsic."

11.3.1.3 EPC OF GROWTH AND EPIC OF ART

An Epic is either a result of natural growth in popular song and story or of conscious literary effort on the part of the artist. The former is variously called the **Folk Epic**, Epic of Growth, or Authentic Epic: the later, the Literary Epic or Epic of Art. A Folk Epic is not the work of one man: modern research shows that before being formulated into an artistic whole it existed in fragments for long ages, forming the stock- in-trade of wandering minstrels or storytellers in verse. These fragments were later collected together by some poet, known or unknown, and given the shape they borne ever since. We have said that the Iliad is Supposed to have been composed by Homer from such fragments, already ancient in his time. The authors of Some Folk Epics remain unknown to this day, as in the case of the English Beowulf, the Germanic *Nibelungenlied,* and the French *Song of Roland.*

A Literary Epic, on the other hand, is deliberately planned in the Epic manner in imitation of its original prototype. It is a comparatively late product. Such are Virgil's *Aeneid,* Tasso's *Jerusalem* Delivered, Spenser's *Faerie Queene,* Milton's *Paradise Lost,* and Camoen's *Lusiad* etc. Each is the product of an individual genius who felt in himself the power to rival the masters of old. In modern times however, the heroic style has gone out of favour, and the Epic, like the poetic drama, has almost ceased to exist. Thomas Hardy's. great epic-drama of the Napoleonic wars, The Dynasts, is indeed designed on the grand scale, but the author's attitude and treatment are very different from that of his predecessors.

11.3.1.4 MOCK EPIC

Italy and France set the fashion for a parody of the Epic form, which later found imitators in England. In this a theme obviously unworthy of the serious Epic - an incident quite trifling in itself - is clothed in all the traditional paraphernalia and solemn dignity of the Epic form. There was a classical precedent in the *Battle of the Frogs and Mice*, a Greek parody of the Iliad. The finest example in English verse is Pope's *Rape of the Lock*, which celebrates an absurdly trivial theme - the theft of a lock of hair from a girl's head - in the Epic manner. The jest lies in the resulting incongruity between theme and treatment: the rendering of a mere piece of mischief, and the family quarrel that followed it, in terms of the sublime. Pope's poem has the complete Epic form: there is the usual opening proposition and invocation: the proper celestial "machinery" or Supernatural element, represented by the spirits of earth,air,water and fire, the dramatic episodes, one of which is the "rape" or theft itself; and all the other devices of the classical Epic. As Hazlitt remarks, "the little has been made great, the great little."

11.3.2 BALLAD

Like the Epic, the Ballad arises out of folk literature. It is one of the oldest forms in English, older than Chaucer, and is one of the few that are of native growth. Originally it was sung from village to village, to the accompaniment of a harp or a fiddle, by strolling singer ór bands of singers, who earned a living in this way. The minstrel usually sang in the chimney corner of the farm-house or on the village green where a knot of eager listeners would assemble to be entertained. In Scott's "Lay of the Last Minstrel" we see him welcomed to the castle hall. In its earliest stages the song must have been accompanied by a crude tribal dance, as its very name seems to imply - for Ballad, etymologically, means a **dancing-song**. In the days before printing was invented it was handed down by oral tradition, each successive generation or locality making its own alterations to suit contemporary or local conditions. Most of the ancient English Ballads were collected in Bishop Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, Published in 1765.

11.3.2.1 Characteristic Features

The Ballad is a short story in verse, originally intended to be sung to an audience. Since it developed at an early stage in man's cultural evolution, its subjects are deeds rather than thoughts, and they are of the simplest kind, such as a memorable feud, a thrilling adventure, a

family disaster, love and war, and the life. The tale is usually fierce and tragic and frequently introduces the supernatural. The form may be summarised as follows:

a) The poem is written in the Ballad Measure, a quatrain in which the first and third lines are four-foot iambic (a short syllable followed by a long), and the second and fourth three-foot iambic, the latter along rhyming, as in the lines below

There lived | a wife | at Ụ | sher's Well,	a	4 feet
A weal | thy wife | was she:	b	3 feet
She had | three stout | and stal | wart sons,	c	4feet
And sent | them o'er | the sea.	b	3 feet

Often variations in the number of both syllables and lines are introduced to suit the requirements of the thought.

b) The tale opens abruptly, without any attempt at a systematic introduction. Sometimes it begins with question and answer, which do not state who the speakers are but make the situation quite clear, as in "The Ship of the Fiend";-

'O where have you been, my long-lost love
This long seven years and mair?'
'O I'm come again to seek your love
And the vows that you did swear.'

("Mair" is Scottish dialect for "more". Many of the ballads come from Scotland.)

c) It is impersonal in treatment, with nothing to show the writer's identity or personality. It is as though the tale told itself. The Epic sometimes has personal touches (e.g. Paradise Lost), but the Ballad never.

d) Often the same lines are repeated from stanza to stanza as a refrain, and stock phrases are freely used.

e) There is no attempt at detail of time or place, the Ballad belonging to a period when both could be ignored or left vague in the interest of the story.

11.3.2.2 Kinds of Ballads

Ballads are primarily of two kinds: the **Ballad of Growth** or (also called the Authentic Ballad), of Ballad of unknown authorship, which has been in existence for ages, and the **Ballad of Art** or Literary Ballad, which may be described, in the words, of W.H. Hudson, "as a literary development of the traditional form." The one is genuine, having grown up naturally among a primitive race, and the other imitative, being a conscious attempt at the

Ballad manner. Some of the best-known among the Authentic Ballads are "Chevy Chase", "The Wife of Usher's Well", and "Sir Patrick Spens"; among the Literary ones, Scott's "Eve of St. John", Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner", and Keats's "La Belle Dame Sans Merci".

A minor form of the Ballad of Art, as in the case of in the epic, is the Mock Ballad, in which a comic theme is treated with the seriousness appropriate to a Ballad. In everything but its humorous subject, it follows it's model closely. Cowper's "John Gilpin" is a famous example. William Maginn's"The Rime of the Ancient Waggoner", parodying "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", is another interesting specimen.

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?
4. Describe characteristic features of Ballad.
5. Write a note on the following
    a. Mock Epic.
    b. Ballad of Growth and Art
    c .Features of an Epic
    d. Homeric Epithets
    e. Development of Epic Form

11.4 LYRIC POETRY

Greek song was divided into two classes- *melic or lyric songs*, which was sung by a single voice to the accompaniment of a lyre; and choric song, which was intended for collective singing to the accompaniment of instrumental music, supplemented probably, by a dance. The first of these divisions is responsible for the lyric as we know it in English verse. True to its Greek origin, it still has the two characteristics implied in the above description: a) It is an expression of a single emotion, and b) it is a musical composition.

11.4.1 Elegy

It was originated in Greece. The term Elegy covered war songs love poems, political verses, lamentations for the dead, in fact a wide range of subjects, both grave and gay. The Greeks judged this composition by its form not by its subject-natter. It was written in the

elegiac measure, a couplet composed of dactylic hexameter followed by Dactylic pentameter (that is to say, one long syllable and two short, six times in the first line, and five times in the second). Any poem written in this metre ranked as an Elegy, whatever its theme might be.

In modern usage, it is the theme that matters, not the metre, and the classical elegiac measure is not used in English verse. An Elegy nowadays takes its name from its subject-matter, not from its form. While no rules are laid down for the metre, the theme of an Elegy must be mournful or sadly reflective. It is usually a lamentation for the dead, though it may be inspired by other sombre themes, such as unrequited love, the fall of a famous city, and the like. It is written as a tribute to something loved and lost. As a rule, it is less spontaneous than the 1yric, except when it takes a purely lyric form (as in Tennyson's "Break, break, break"), and is often elaborate in style like the Ode.

Thus, in writing an Elegy, an English poet is not limited to any one form, but may choose Whatever Seems to him most fitting, Though some of the most touching poems of personal loss have been written in very simple language, the formal Elegy usually aims at an effect of dignity and solemnity without a sense of strain or artificiality, This was magnificently achieved by Gray in his "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard", and the form he adopted – quatrains in iambic pentameter (lines of ten syllable, alternately short and long) - was ideal for his purpose. We read it, however, as it was intended to be read, as a conscious work of art not a spontaneous expression of sorrow. Otherwise any elaborate and complex mode of utterance might cause us to question the sincerity of the poet's emotion, as Dr. Johnson did when he remarked, "where there is leisure for fiction, there is little grief."

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)

During the Renaissance a new kind of Elegy was as introduced into English poetry which was named as ***Pastoral Elegy***, It followed a a convention by which the poet represented himself as the a shepherd bewailing the loss of a companion. The manner of speech and the setting were borrowed from rustic life, and whatever the poet had to say or describe was phrased accordingly. This convention lasted down. to modern times, Milton's Lycidas, and Matthew Arnold's Thyrsis, in memory of his friend the poet A.H. Clough, are pastoral elegies, employing pastoral images and sentiments. This is how Milton recalls his past association with Edward King in Lycidas:

For we were nursed upon the self-same hill,

Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade and rill.

Shorn of the pastoral metaphor, the lines mean that Milton and King were students of the same College (were nursed upon the self-same hill) and shared the same pursuits there (fed the same flock by fountain, shade and rill).

The form arose among the Sicilian Greeks, originating probably with Theocritus whose idylls and Epigrams are the earliest poems known to us which are written in the pastoral manner. lt was perfected later f by the Latin poet Virgil, whose Eclogues and Georgics are noted for their vivid treatment of the scenes and labours of the countryside, It then fell out of use for a long time, till it was revived in Italy during the 15th and 16th centuries in the period of the general rebirth of classical culture, It soon found imitators in other parts of Europe, including England. With Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* it may be said to have taken root in English soil. Lycidas probably owes its choice of form to Spenser's Astrophel, a pastoral lamenting his patron and intimate friend Sir Philip Sydney.

11.4.2 ODE

Like its parent form, the lyric, the Ode is of Greek origin. It is a serious and dignified composition, almost always in rhyme and longer than the lyric proper. It is often in the form of an address, and is sometimes used to commemorate an important public occasion, Each of these characteristics may be analyzed separately as follows:

a) It is exalted in subject-matter, and elevated in tone and style. Neither the theme nor its treatment can be trivial or undignified. The poet is serious both in the choice of his subject and in the manner of its presentation. He must show himself at the height of his power. Note, for example, the difference between the style of Wordsworth's poems on simple country Scenes and incidents and that of his sublime "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality."

b) It is longer than the lyric proper, for the emotion it embodies is of a kind that admits of development. It does not, like the lyric, aim at giving the effect of "unpremeditated art". It may be full of deep and sincere emotion, but its expression is expected to be much more consciously elaborate, impressive, and diffuse.

c) Unlike other form of verse it is often addressed directly to the being or object it treats of. The opening lines sometimes contain an apostrophe or appeal, which is characteristic of the whole treatment of the poem. Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" begins 'O wild west wind';

Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn", "Thou still unravished bride of quietness", Tennyson's "To Virgil," "Roman Virgil, thou that singest," and so on. The mode is maintained throughout in each case.

d) Sometimes the ode has for its theme an important public event like a national jubilee, the death of a distinguished personage, the commemoration of the founding of a great University. Marvell's "Upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland" and Tennyson's "Ode On the Death of the Duke of Wellington" are instances in point.

11.4.2.1 The Dorian or Pindaric Ode

The Greek Ode had two forms: The Dorian Ode so called from the district and dialect in which it arose, and the Lesbian Ode, named after the island of Lesbos, where it originally flourished. The Dorian Ode was choric and was sung to the accompaniment of a dance. The structure was borrowed from the movements of the dancers. It consisted of three parts: a stanza-form. known as the Strophe, during the recitation of which the dancers made a turn from the right to the left: a similar stanza-form, known as the Antistrophe, during the recitation of which the dancers made a counter-turn from the left to the right; and a third stanza-form, different in structure from the previous two, known as the Epode, during the recitation of which the dancers stood still. This sequence of a Strophe, an Antistrophe, and an Epode could be repeated any number of times in an Ode of this type. It is repeated thrice in Gray's Odes, "The Progress of Poesy" and "The Bard", which are among the most successful imitations of this form in the English language. From its brilliant use by the ancient Greek poet Pindar, the Dorian form is more usually known as the Pindaric Ode.

11.4.2.2 The Lesbian or Horatian Ode:

The Lesbian Ode was simpler in form than the Pindaric and has therefore proved easier for poets to imitate. As exemplified in English verse, it consists of a number of short stanzas, similar in length and arrangement. The treatment is direct and dignified, and the thought clearly developed. It was popularized in Latin by two great Roman writers Horace and Catullus. The works of Horace in particular served as a model to English imitators of the form, and English Odes of this type are commonly known as Horatian Odes, a practice which tends to obscure their Greek origin. The following two stanzas from Andrew Marvell's "Upon

Cromwell's Return from Ireland, which is a Lesbian or, as the author termed it, Horatian Ode, illustrate its characteristics. They describe Charles I's conduct on the scaffold.

He nothing common did or mean
Upon that memorable scene,
But with his keener eye
The axe's edge did try;

Nor call'd the Gods, with vulgar spite,
To vindicate his helpless rights;
But bow'd his comely head
Down, as upon a bed.

As is evident, the stanzas are short (having only four lines each) and similar (observing the same arrangement in respect of rhyme and metre), and convey the thought in a plain, straightforward fashion, the style is sober and stately, after the Latin manner, with none of the passionate warmth of the Pindaric Ode.

11.4.2.3 The Ode in English Literature

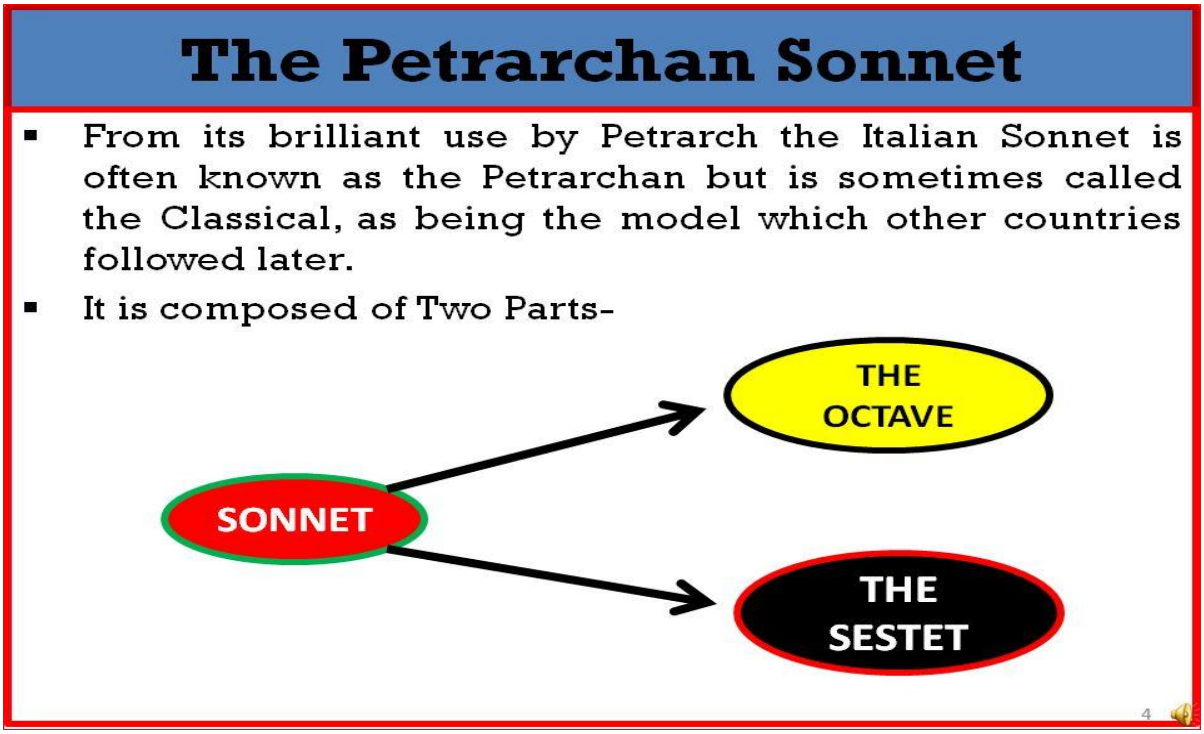
Except for a few attempts in the Pindaric or the Horatian form, the English Ode has pursued a course of its own as regards subject-matter and style, treatment and outlook, not strictly bound by classical traditions. It is either Regular, consisting of a series of exactly similar stanzas, like the Odes of Shelley and Keats, or Irregular, when each stanza follows a different arrangement, as in Wordsworth's Immortality Ode and several of the Odes of Tennyson and Robert Bridges.

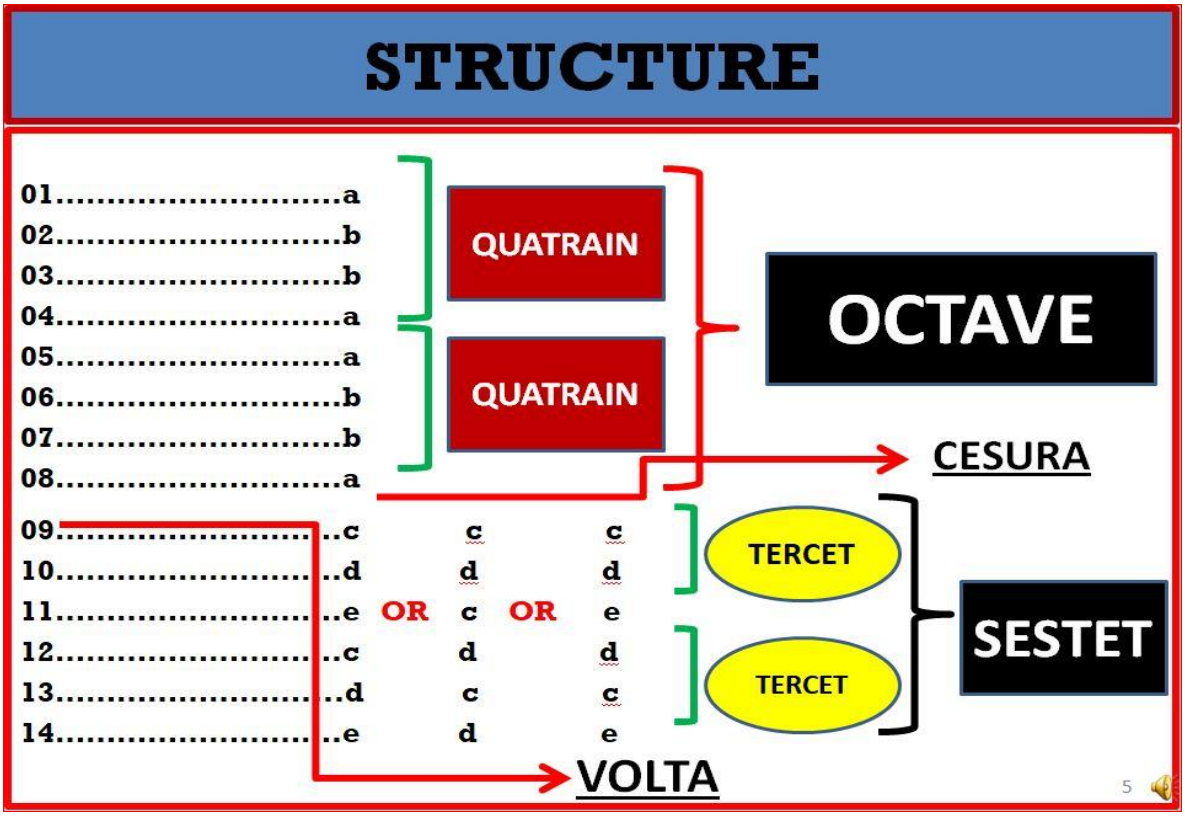
11.4.3 Sonnet

The birthplace of the Sonnet has not been definitely determined. Sicily and Provence have been suggested as two possible sources. It is, however, first met with in Italy in the latter half of the 13th century. It is particularly associated with the name of the great Italian poet, Petrarch, though the form had been used before him by no less a genius than Dante. It was originally a short poem, recited to the accompaniment of music - the word "sonnet" being a derivative of the Italian "sonetto," meaning a little sound or strain.

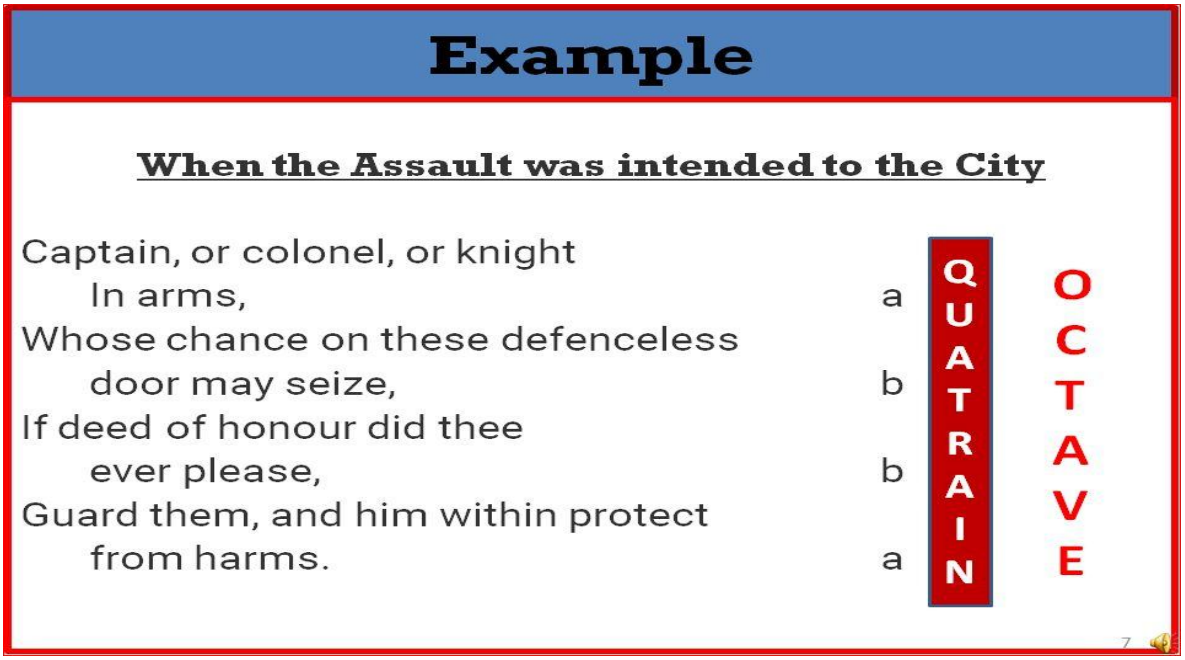
11.4.3.1 The Italian Sonnet

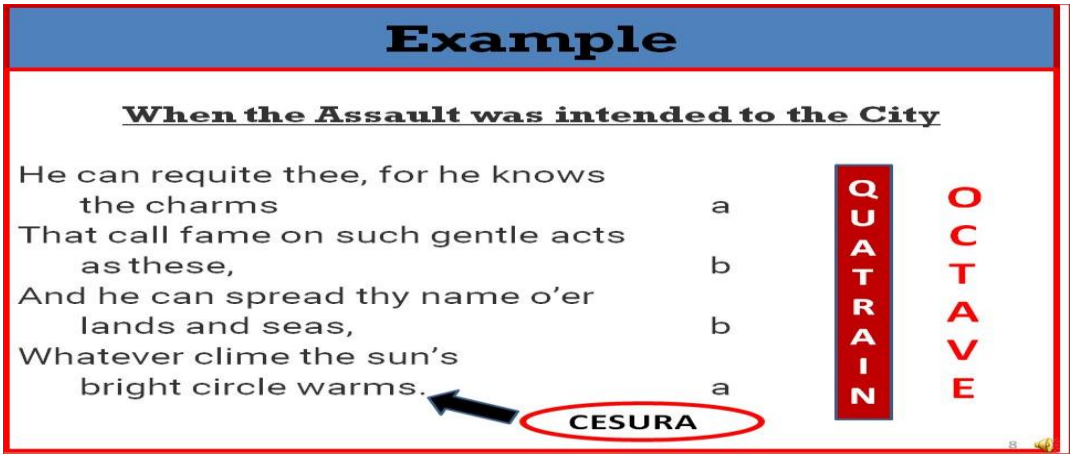
\From its brilliant use by Petrarch, the Italian Sonnet is often known as the *Petarchan* but is sometimes called the *classical*, as being the model which other countries followed later. It is a short poem of fourteen lines, expressing one single thought or feeling. It is composed of two parts - *the octave*, a stanza of eight lines, and *the sestet*, a stanza of six. The octave has two rhymes (say a and b) arranged according to the following scheme: abba, abba, that is to say, the first line rhyming with the fourth, the fifth, and the eighth; and the second with the third, the sixth, and the seventh. The sestet sometimes has three rhymes and sometimes two, different from those employed in the octave and arranged in various ways as follows: cde. cde (the first line rhyming with the fourth, the second with the fifth, and the third with the sixth); or cdc, dcd; or cde, dce. The octave may be divided into two stanzas of four lines each, called *quatrains*; and the sestet into two of three lines each, called *tercets*. At the end of the octave, i.e. after the eighth line, there is a well-marked pause or caesura (indicated by the punctuation, and often emphasised by a space), followed by a volta or turn in the thought, which implies that the thought, though it has not been dropped is given a new application or summarised, or possibly disputed, in the sestet. Yet this break is not invariably found in the Italian Sonnet, or in Milton, who revived the Italian form. For instance, there is no division between the octave and the sestet in his famous sonnet "On His Blindness".

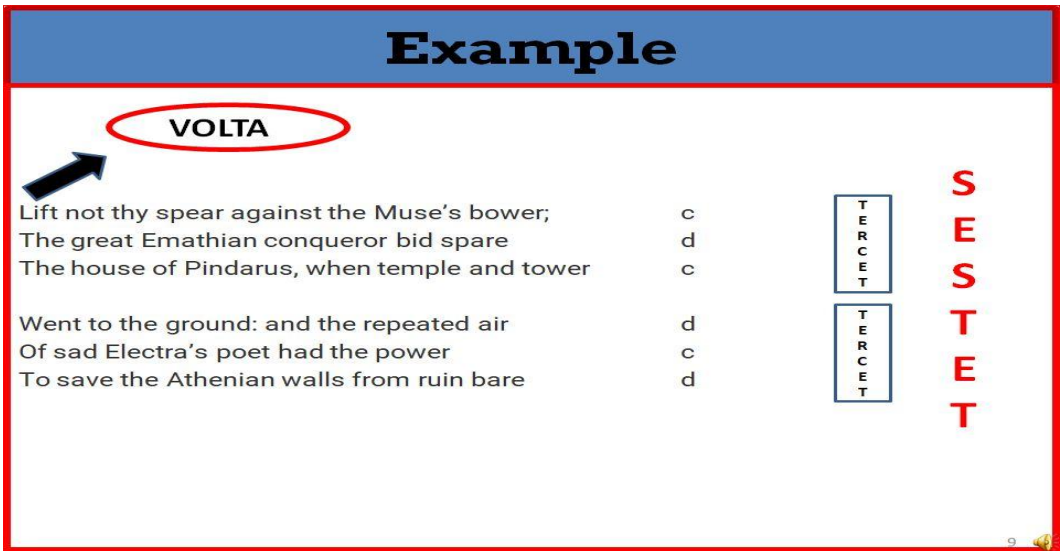




The Structure of Petrarchan Sonnet







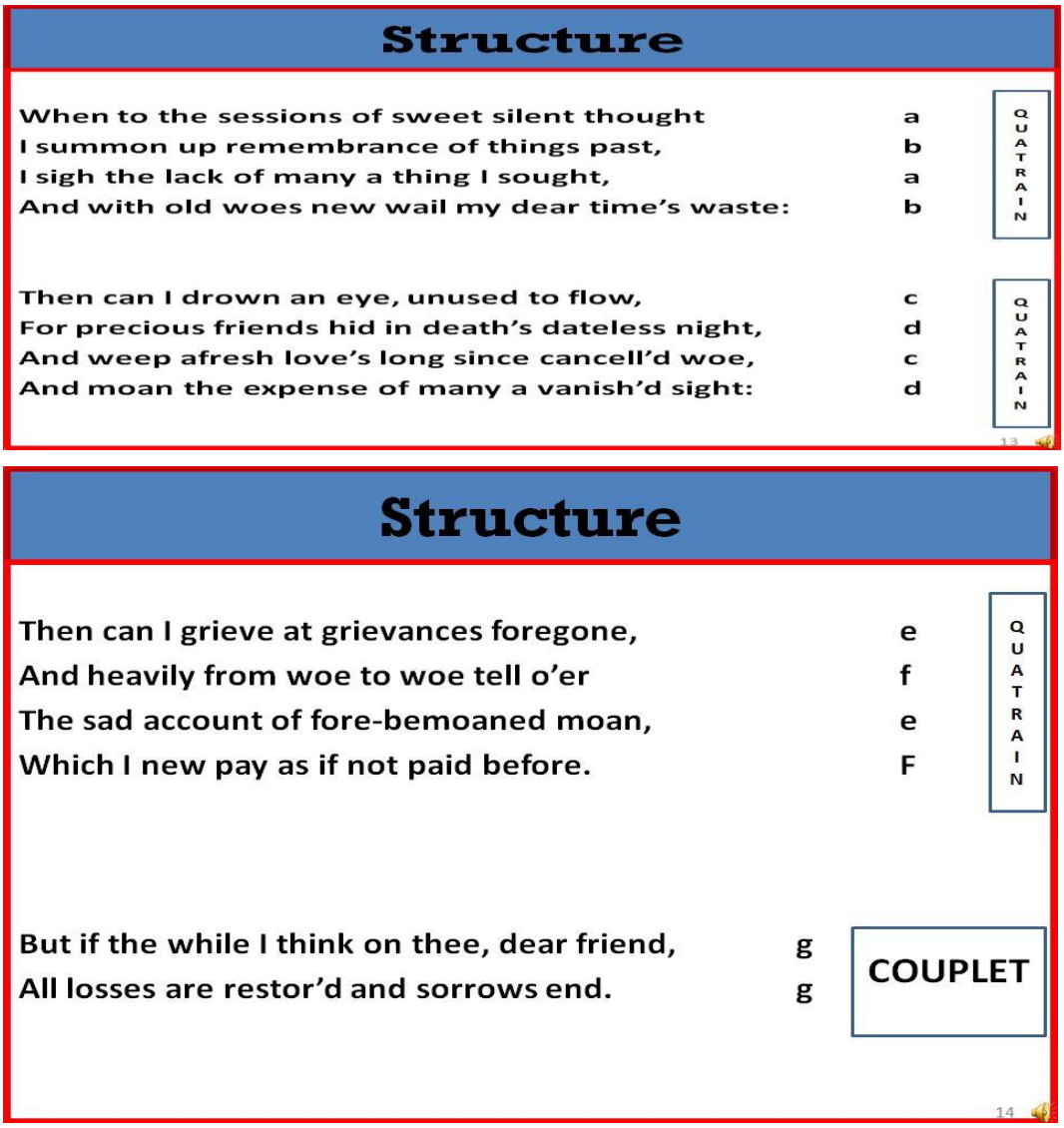
Petarchan Sonnet: An Example

11.4.3.2 The English Sonnet:

The Sonnet was introduced into England in the first half of the 16th century by Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, two English politicians, who after their return from a diplomatic mission in Italy, wrote verses in this form for pleasure. In their hands, however, the form underwent a change, and Surrey, in particular, adopted a rhyme-scheme widely different from that of his Italian model. He wrote his sonnets in three quatrains, in alternate rhyme, followed by a concluding couplet: abab, cdcd, efef, gg- a form so splendidly used by Shakespeare later that it is now called after him, not after Surrey its real originator. Since it is divided into four parts, it has no pause and turn of thought (*Caesura* and *Volta*) at the end of the eight lines: it work's right up the final couplet, where the highest peak of the poet's thought is reached.

The following sonnet by Shakespeare, commonly called "Remembrance", may be studied as a model of the Shakespearean type. In the quatrains the poet expresses grief over past

misfortunes - the lack of many a thing he sought (quatrain 1), precious friends hid in death's dateless night (quatrain 2), grievances foregone (quatrain 3) - but the climax of the thought is reached in the couplet, where to the reader's and also the poet's delight all losses are made up by the mere remembrance of a living friend, whom he loves.



The Structure of English Sonnet: 'Remembrance'

11.4.3.3 The Spenserian Sonnet

It will be noted that the quatrains in the Shakespearean Sonnet are all unconnected with one another: they have each their own rhymes and cannot, therefore, be said to be related *structurally*, though they are united by their subject-matter. Earlier, however, Spenser had evolved a new variety, in which each of the quatrains was linked to the other by an

intermixture of the rhymes in the following: abab, bcbc, cdcd ee, the second rhyme of the first quartrain introduced as the first rhyme of the second, and the second rhyme of the second quatrain as the first rhyme of the third; the couplet, however, stands alone, as in the Shakespearean type. In other respects there is little difference between the Spenserian form and the Shakespearean. The following is an example of the Spenserian form.

Ye tradeful merchants, that, with weary toil.	a
Do seek most precious things to make your gain;	b
And both the Indias of their treasure spoil;	a
What needeth you to seek so far in vain?	b
For lo, my love doth in herself contain	b
All this world's riches that may far be found:	c
If sapphires, lo, her eyes be sapphires plain;	b
If rubies, lo, her lips be rubies sound;	c
If pearls, her teeth be pearls, both pure and round;	c
If ivory, her forehead ivory ween;	d
If gold, her locks are finest gold on ground;	c
If silver, her fair hands are silver sheen;	d
But that which fairest is, but few behold,	e
Her mind adorned with virtues manifold.	e

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. Explain The Petrarchan Sonnet and its structure.
5. Why Pindaric ode is is called so?

11.5 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.

11.5.1 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.

Another Sense of the Term On the contemporary stage in England the term Dramatic Monologue is sometimes used to describe the performance of a scene from a famous novel by an actor dressed as one of the characters in the book, or for the recitation of a stirring of amusing narrative in verse. There are also a few gifted actors and actresses who can appear alone and delight a whole audience with a series of impersonations of various characters: an old soldier recalling bygone days; a peasant woman in church; a lady showing a visitor round her garden, and so on. These too, are often called Dramatic Monologues.

11.6 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.

11.6.1 Blank and Free Verse

According to M.H.Abrams, Blank verse consists of lines of iambic pentameter (five-stress iambic verse) which are unrhymed -hence the term "blank." Of all English metrical forms it is closest to the natural rhythms of English speech, yet flexible and adaptive to diverse levels of discourse; as a result it has been more frequently and variously used than any other form of versification. Soon after blank verse introduced by the Earl of Surrey in his translations of Books 2 and 4 of Virgil's *The Aeneid* (about 1540), it became the standard meter for Elizabethan and later poetic drama. John Milton used blank verse for his epic *Paradise Lost* (1667)), James Thomson for his descriptive and philosophical *Seasons* (1726-30). William Wordsworth for his autobiographical *Pręlude* (1805), Alfred, Lord Tennyson for the narrative Idylls of the King (1891),Robert Browning for the *Ring and the Book* (1868-69) and many dramatic monologues, and T. S. Eliot for much of *The Waste Land* (1922). A large number of meditative lyrics, from the Romantic Period to the present, have also been written in blank verse, including Coleridge's *Frost at Mid night*," Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey* Tennyson's *Tears, ldle Ters"* (in which the blank verse is divided into five-line stanzas), and Wallace Stevens' "Sunday Morning".

Divisions in blank verse poems, used to set off a sustained passage, are called **verse paragraphs**. See, for example, the great verse paragraph of twenty-six lines which initiates Milton's Paradise Lost, beginning with "Of man's first disobedience" and ending with "And justify the ways of God to men"; also, the opening verse paragraph of twenty-two lines in Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" (1798), which begins:

> Five years have past; five summers, with the length
>
> Of five long winters! and again I hear
>
> These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
>
> With a soft inland murmur

Free Verse is also known as "open form" verse, or by the French term **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.

Matthew Arnold sometimes used free verse, notably in "Dover Beach." But it was the French poets of the late nineteenth century --Rimbaud, Laforgue, 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 Rainer Maria Rilke, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Carl Sandburg, and William Carlos Williams.

11.6.2 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.

The Heroic Couplet consists of two iambic pentameters (lines of ten syllables) rhyming together. The following is an example:

We think | our fa | thers fools, | so wise | we grow,

Our wi | ser sons, | no doubt,| wil think | us so.

Pope

It is called "heroic" because ten-syllable iambic verse, whether it rhymes or not, is the usual form for epic verse in English, celebrating heroic exploits. Its standard form, as exemplified by Pope, involves a pause at the end of every line and the completion of the sense at the end of the couplet. The running on of the sense without pause from line to line or couplet to couplet "'split," to link up the sense of one at least of the two lines with that of the preceding or succeeding couplet. It is always "closed" or complete in itself. The rhyme is single, falling in each line on the last syllable, which metrically is accented or long. Double rhyme (as in "lightly" and "brightly", where both the syllables of the one rhyme with both of the other) is rarely found, though Pope uses "Heaven" and "seven",. All these characteristics may be noted in the couplet quoted above:

a) There is a pause at the end of the first line, indicated by a comma, signifying partial completion of the sense.

b) There is a pause at the end of the couplet, indicated by a full stop, signifying full completion of the sense.

c) The couplet is closed, not requiring the aid of either a predecessor or a successor to complete its meaning.

d) The rhyme is single, the rhyming parts of each line, "grow" and "so", being single syllables.

e) The number of syllables is ten, the odd ones unaccented or short, the even accented o long.

Variations: The use of the Heroic Couplet has varied from time to time and from poet to poet. It was practised most correctly by Pope, and even he does always conform strictly to its rules, for, as he himself aptly remarks,

> Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see
>
> Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be.

A special feature of his heroic verse is a pause or caesura towards the middle of every line, and the symmetrical structure of the couplet where each line, and each half of the line, is balanced against the other.

The Heroic Couplet was first used in England by Chaucer, who probably derived it from older French verse. Many of his *Canterbury Tales* are related in Heroic Couplets. He was followed by Spenser, who employed it for his *Mother Hubbard's Tale*, a satirical narrative in verse. The Elizabethans used it with equal skill in their poetry and drama, some like Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, employing it occasionally for the sake of variety or to round off a passage, and others, like Marlowe in his *Hero and Leander*, adopting it for story-telling in verse. Their chief instrument, however, was the ten-syllable unrhymed or blank verse. Milton and the Metaphysical poets had little predilection for the couplet.

It was left to Dryden and Pope, however, to give the Heroic Couplet a quality it had never possessed before. It was they who imparted to it the easy vigour, and strength, which Pope attributed to his predecessors. They used it for various compositions drama, epic, satire, didactic verse - each of which it served with remarkable adaptability, though it proved too formal and intellectual a metre for the lyric; it does not suggest a song. With the coming of the Romantic poets, about the beginning of the 19th century, the couplet structure was changed. It became enjambed, line running on into line, couplet into couplet (with the pauses constantly changing position from line to line) according as the sense required. It became, in other words, a verse paragraph, growing far beyond the two-line limit. Metrical variations were also introduced more frequently.

11.6.3 Terza Rima

The Terza Rima is a tercet (a stanza of three lines) in which the first and third lines rhyme together, and the middle one rhymes with the first and third of the succeeding tercet. It forms a unit in a running series of tercets, each of which sets the rhyme for the next. Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" is a familiar example. Other notable examples are the same poet's "Triumph of Life", Byron's "Prophecy of Dante", Browning's "The Statue and the Bust", and William Morris's "Defence of Guenevere". As its name suggests the Terza Rima is an Italian measure, adopted from Dante's *Divine Comedy*. In its strictest form the end of the tercet also marks the end of the sentence, but the Romantics preferred the enjambed variety.

The most important element of terza rima is the form's interlocking rhyme scheme of **ABA BCB CDC DED**. The rhyme scheme here will have the second line of the stanza rhyme with the first and third lines of the next stanza. This creates an interlocking effect, as it links each of the stanzas together. Poems written in Terza Rima were traditionally longer in length (each section of the 'Divine Comedy' has 33 cantos), so an interlocking rhyme scheme was used to move the reader forward in the poem, utilizing its surging narrative effect.

This is seen in the poem, 'Acquainted with the Night' (1928) by Robert Frost.

I have been one acquainted with the night. A

I have walked out in rain—and back in rain. B

I have outwalked the furthest city light. A

I have looked down the saddest city lane. B

I have passed by the watchman on his beat C

Key features:

1. Terza rima is a type of poem that consists of tercets written using an interlocking rhyme scheme.

2. It was first used by Dante in his poem ‘Divine Comedy’ (1308-1320).

3. There is a strict rhyme scheme ABABCBCDC.

4. Some modern poets will use slant or imperfect rhymes in Terza rima poems.

5. There is no such meter, however majority of poets prefer iambic pentameter.

11.6.4 Rima royal

This is a stanza of seven lines in iambic pentameter rhyming ababbcc: the first with the third, the second with the fourth and fifth, the couplet standing alone. It was first used in England by Chaucer who probably borrowed it from France. The name of Rhyme Royal probably comes from its adoption by King James I of Scotland in his *King's Quair*. Much of Chaucer's work is written in this stanza: *Troilus and Cressida, The Parliament of Fowls, The Prioress's Tale, Clerk's Tale, Man of Law's Tale, and Second Nun's Tale*. It is eminently suited for narrative verse, as in these works, and has been frequently used in later times. It was adopted by Shakespeare for *The Rape of Lucrece*, from which a stanza is reproduced below, and nearer, our own day by William Morris in parts of The Earthly Paradise.

Then, childish fear, avaunt! Debating, die!	a
Respect and reason, wait on wrinkled age!	b
My heart shall never countermand mine eye:	a
Sad pause and deep regard beseem the sage;	b
My part is youth, and beats these from the stage:	b
Desire my pilot is, beauty my prize:	c
Then who fears sinking where such treasure lies?	c

11.6.5 Spenserian Stanza

For the Faerie Queene Spenser used a nine. line stanza which has borne his name ever since It consists of two linked quatrains in iambic pentameters, rounded off with an Alexandrine rhyming with the eighth line: abab, bcbc, c. In spite of its division into two quatrains and the final line longer by a foot than the rest, it is one inseparable unit owing to the interweaving of rhymes from the beginning to the end. The second quatrain continues a rhyme of the first, and the closing line one of the second. There is no separation at the end from the earlier rhymes, as in the Ottava Rima, which Spenser found unfit for his purpose. The Alexandrine relieves the monotony of the two preceding quatrains and gives a sense of completion. It is a stanza admirably suited to a lengthy narrative and descriptive poem with lofty rhetorical passages.

It has certain drawbacks, its length encourages prolixity and over-adornment, and it requires one of the rhymes to be repeated thrice and another four times, which sometimes visibly taxes

the poet's ingenuity. Nevertheless, great writers since Spenser have employed it frequently. The Augustans neglected it, but in the Transition period between them and the Romantics, several poets, notably Thomson and Burns, used it most successfully. Byron adopted it for "Childe Harold", Keats for "The Eve of St. Agnes, Shelley for "Adonais" and "The Revolt of Islam", and Tennyson for the opening of "The Lotus-Eaters". The following examples of this stanza are taken from Byron. The reader will, note their pictorial quality, and also the ease with which the technical difficulties are surmounted. Byron's lines are addressed to the Ocean:-

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form	a
Glasses itself in tempests; in all time, -	b
Calm or convulsed, in breeze, or gale, or storm,	a
lcing the pole, or in the torrid clime	b
Dark-heaving - boundless, endless, and sublime,	b
The image of eternity, the throne	c
Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime	b
The monsters of the deep are made; each zone	c
Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.	c

Childe Harold, Canto IV

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.
4. Explain features of Spenserian Stanza.
5. Describe the development of Heroic Couplet in English Literature.

11.7 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.

11.8 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

Prasad A *Background to the study of English Literature*, New Delhi: Macmillan Publishers India Pvt Ltd.2007.Print

11.9 Terminal and Model Questions

1. What are the chief characteristics of Dramatic Monologue?

2. Write short notes on the following:

- Ode
- Sonnet

UNIT 12 INTRODUCTION TO DRAMA

12.1 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.

12.2 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

12.3 TYPES OF DRAMA

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.

12.4 TRAGEDY

From the earliest times drama has been divided broadly into two kinds, Tragedy and Comedy. The one dealing with the dark side of life, the other with its light side. Tragedy aims at inspiring us with pity and awe; Comedy aims at evoking our laughter. In Tragedy the characters are involved in circumstances that impel them towards an unhappy fate. In Comedy, though fortune may be unkind for a while, all comes right in the end.

Tragedy, in the Greek drama, deals with the fate of characters of high birth and station, kings, princes, and their households; Comedy with people of much less importance. In ancient Greece the tragic actor put on a thick-soled and high-heeled boot, called the **buskin** or **cothurnus**, to make him appear tall and majestic; the comic actor wore a light shoe, called the **sock**, to show his lower degree. Though humble men can suffer just as deeply as the

great, and their misfortunes equally deserve our pity, it was not unreasonable for the old dramatists to feel that only the lives of the famous and powerful offered fitting subjects for Tragedy, The fall of a king. or the ruin of a great family, is bound to be more impressive to the spectator than the fate of a nonentity, and the doings of an ordinary mortal can scarcely be clothed in sublime poetic language, grandeur and dignity. Milton's lines in *Il Penseroso* give the essence of Classical Tragedy:

> Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy
>
> In sceptred pall come sweeping by.
>
> Presenting Thebes, or Pelopes' line.
>
> Or the tale of Troy divine.

In later literature there were many tragedies of lowly life and many comedies of high society. The most poignant of Hardy's tragic novels, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* which was successfully dramatized, has a dairymaid for its heroine (her is no hero), and some of the most memorable figures in Shakespeare's comedies are people of rank: Falstaff and Sir Toby Belch among the men, and Portia and Rosalind among the women. Tears and laughter override considerations of caste, creed, or colour. One might weep as much for dairymaid Tess as for King Lear, or laugh as much at Sir John Falstaff as at Nick Bottom, the weaver. The eighteenth century saw the rise of a new type of tragedy, called the **Domestic Tragedy**, which attempted to use the characters and incidents ot ordinary life as the subject of serious drama. George Lillo's *London Merchant* is a famous example, "Men of letters praised it. Royalty perused it in palace boudoir. Spectators flocked again and again to see it on the stage."! Masefield and Galsworthy have been equally successful in our own age. One very important point must, however be borne in mind: plays of this type were written in prose, not in verse.

Tragic and Comic Atmosphere

The atmosphere of Tragedy is somber and serious, that of Comedy mirthful and light. Tragedy "purges the emotions through pity and terror" (in Aristotle's famous phrase); Comedy moves us to laughter, whether it is thoughtful laughter or unalloyed mirth. Speaking of "pure" Tragedy and "pure" Comedy, in which there is no element of the one mingled with the other. Such were the classical plays of both Greece and Rome. In English literature the two are frequently found intermingled. There are comic interludes in many of the tragedies, and a background of tragic possibilities in many of the comedies, to heighten the effect of

each by contrast. The same note is not sustained throughout. Thus Shakespeare's tragedies may begin happily and end unhappily, and his comedies may begin unhappily and end happily. The final situation is all the more effective by contrast with what has gone before. This type of plot suits the English temperament and is also more in accordance with the realities of life, which is never wholly sun or wholly shadow. These variations, however, do not affect the general atmosphere, which is gloomy in Tragedy and bright in Comedy, as we have already said. The one moves inevitably towards disaster, the other towards "resolution of the discords."

Both Comedy and Tragedy aim at giving pleasure. This is obvious enough as regards Comedy, but it may seem strange to say that pleasure can be found in the spectacle of a human being's sufferings and unhappy fate. Nevertheless, Tragedy does afford pleasure, and of a lofty order. The spectacle of a noble character caught in the coils of circumstance, when the language and the artistry of the presentation rise to match the high passions and issues of the story, carries the audience to a level far above the petty interests and troubles of its own everyday life, If feels exalted and ennobled, rather than distressed, It would echo Milton's words: "Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail or knock the breast." Its sensations when the curtain drops are akin to the "sad wonder which the sight of the ruins of fallen empires stirred in Byron's *Childe Harold*.

For the Greeks, however, Tragedy and Comedy served two distinct purposes. The purpose of (Tragedy was to effect a *Catharsis* or a purgation of the emotions, that of Comedy Was to Correct manners. Tragedy purified the feelings, Comedy refined the conduct; the one raised the audience morally and spiritually, the other corrected its Social failings

The story, in Tragedy as in Comedy, is usually allowed to convey its own moral, though it is sometimes stated at the end of the play by one of the characters. Even in the most tragic drama, wrong does not triumph, though right may have been worsted for a time; the wrongdoers are punished if they have not already brought about their own undoing, and sometimes good comes out of evil, as in the reconciliation of the Montagues and Capulets at the end of *Romeo and Juliet.* These concluding episodes, coming after the peak of the tragedy, have often been said to produce an anti-climax, but they have their own importance, for they bring it home to us that life goes on after the worst of catastrophes, and thus, as has been finely said of the entry of Fortinbras after the death of Hamlet, they link the action with eternity.

Verse used to be medium for both Tragedy and he Comedy. Shakespeare's comedies are written in blank verse, often as superbly wrought as in his tragedies. These are, of course, prose passages in both, usually when a clown, a rustic, or madman is speaking, though sometimes, for example in *As You Like It*, the principal characters have long conversations in prose. The playwright moved from one to the other as he thought fit. Gradually, however, verse came to be reserved for Tragedy and Comedy confined itself to prose. It continued for some time to be, as in the works of the Restoration dramatists, such as Congreve, prose of of a very ornate, imaginative, witty and unrealistic order, and it was only at a comparatively recent date that it came really close to the forms of ordinary conversational speech.

Types of Tragedy

Tragedy can be classified in two ways: with reference to its *form* or structure, and with reference to its *matter* or theme. From the earliest times, broadly speaking, Tragedy has assumed only two forms: **Classical** and **Romantic**, the former based on Greek conventions, the latter obeying only its own standards. The main features of the Classical type are the observance of what are called the **Three Unities** and the employment of the device of the **Chorus**. The theory of the Three Unities of Time, Action, and Place- is based on passages in the writings of Aristotle. Aristotle, however, mentions only the first two, the third, that of Place, being implied in the first. Unity of Time means that the time over which the plot is spread be the same or approximately the same. Apparently it was held that if events extending over years were shown in a few hours on the stage, they would have no semblance of reality for the logical Greek mind. The Unity of Action makes a double provision: the plot should either be purely tragic or purely comic but not a mixture of the (though there was some light relief in the tragedies of Euripides); and no sub-plot, or episodes un- connected with the main theme should be introduced. In other words, the action (or events of the play) should be confined to one species and one single plot to ensure verisimilitude. The incidents must all be logically connected. The Unity of Place is a natural corollary of the Unity of Time. If the play must limit itself to events that cover only a few hours, it must be confined to one place. The scene could not, in those days, have been Athens in the first act and Alexandria in the next, as that would require a plot spread over a long period, and so violate the Unity of Time, The scene must be such as might be conceivable within the short time allowed to the action of the plot.

The Chorus is the other noteworthy element in Greek tragedy. It consisted of a body of actors, whose business it was to report what happened off the stage and to make such moral comments from time to time as would deepen the desired effect. It was sometimes an integral part of the plot, sometimes only loosely related to it, The Greek theatrical tradition - the heavy costume, the obstructive cothurnus, and the loosely-hanging mask, all of which the tragic actor put on to appear something more than human - did not favour the representation of violent physical actions the stage; these were reported, instead, by the Chorus. lts more important function, however, was to send the audience away with a strengthened conviction of the might of the gods, for which purpose it frequently indulged in lengthy moral reflections interrupting the progress of the plot.

The Romantic tragedy is built on a different plan. It is not circumscribed by the Three Unities, and except for an occasional introductory passage, it does not employ the Chorus, being neither afraid of introducing physical action on the stage nor compelled to be didactic. It is not debarred from choosing a plot ranging over long stretches of time, or necessitating a mixture of the tragic and the comic, or from introducing a sub-plot. The scene of action may also change as often as the plot requires, Romantic tragedy, in short, is written not to a set pattern but in whatever form the writer finds best suited to his dramatic purpose, The name of Shakespeare is inseparably associated with this type of Tragedy, though it had been popularized earlier in England by Marlowe.

12.5 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 tne 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. Whereas 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*.

12.5.1 Comedy of Humour

According to M.H Abrams, it was developed by Ben Jonson, the Elizabethan playwright, based on the ancient physiological theory of the "four humours" that was still current in Jonson's time. The humours were held to be the four primary fluids- blood, phlegm Choler (or yellow bile), and melancholy (or black bile) whose "temperament" (mixture) was held to determine a person's both physical condition and type of character. An imbalance of one or another humour in a temperament was said to produce four kinds of disposition, whose names have survived the underlying theory: sanguine (from the Latin "sanguis," blood), phlegmatic, choleric, and melancholic. In Jonson's comedy of humours each of the major

characters has a preponderant humour that gives him a characteristic distortion of eccentricity of disposition.

His two outstanding works in this kind of comedy are *Every Man in His Humour* (1598) and *Every Man Out of His Humour* (1599); plus minor works like *The Magnetic Lady*: *or Humours Reconciled* (1632). Following the practice of the Moralities and Interludes, Jonson named *dramatis personae* most aptly: Kitely, Dame Kitely, Knowell, Brainworm and Justice Clement (in *Every Man in His Humour*); Fastidious Brisk, Fungoso, Sordido, and Puntarvolo the vainglorious knight, and so forth (in *Every Man Out of His Humour*). The indication of character in this fashion became a common practice and continued to be much favoured by dramatists and novelists in the 18th and 19th century.

John Fletcher, a contemporary of Jonson's, wrote a number of 'humour comedies, and other plays of note from the period are Chapman's *All Fools* (c. 16o4), Middleton's *A Trick to Catch the Old One* (160s) and Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (162$). Shadwell revived comedy of humours late in the 17th century with *The Squire of Alsatia* (1688) and *Bury Fair* (1689).

12.6 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. It is a form by itself with a purpose of its own. The comic relief in a tragedy serves only to intensify the tragic effect by contrast, and does not materially affect the tone of the play. The function of the Porter in *Macbeth* is not to be a comic figure; his drunken garrulousness and ignorance of the murder of Duncan heighten the audience's awareness of the horrible deed, and make it wait more tensely for the crime to be a discovered. Similarly, with the grave- diggers in *Hamlet* and the Fool in *King Lear*: they are not meant to evoke untroubled laughter, as comic characters are, but to add their own queer fancies to the tragic theme.

A comedy with a tragic background, similarly, is a more effective comedy than it otherwise would be. The wrongs done to the chief character at the opening of the play, as in *As You Like It*, or later in its course, as *in Much Ado About Nothing*, are the making of the story, and we are all the happier when they are righted. Tragi Comedy stands on a different footing altogether. It is -a complete tragedy up to a certain point, and a complete comedy thereafter.

The Complication sets forth a tragic theme; the Denouement turns it into comedy. Or, to put it in another way, the Rising Action (or growth of the plot) is tragedy, the Falling Action (or its downward course) comedy. The Climax separates the one from the other. Among such dramas are Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, *Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest.*

The structural peculiarities of this type of play occasion a different treatment of its theme. The plot is not what one might expect in a tragedy or a comedy but a tale of mingled weal and woe frequently verging on the improbable. The characters, again, are not always on one plane. Many undergo a transformation, sometimes natural, sometimes rather forced, before the play closes. The supernatural and the pastoral are also freely exploited. The general atmosphere is one of fantasy, which explains the alternative name for a play of this kind, the Dramatic Romance.

Origin and History:

Tragi-Comedy, as we find it in English was unknown to the Greeks, whose Unity of Action definitely forbade a mixture of the tragic and the comic. Plautus, the Latin comic dramatist, attempted something of the sort in his *Amphitruo*, which he called a "tragico-comoedia," but that was perhaps a mere freak of genius, not the result of a deliberate artistic aim. The English form arose in the reign of James I under Italian and Spanish influences, the one being responsible for the pastoral element and the other for the romantic intrigue, both of which are characteristic of the English Tragi-Comedy. It was the dramatic counterpart of the prose romance, so popular in England and other European countries at the time. Beaumont and Fletcher's *A King and No King* finally established it on the English stage, and Shakespeare handled the form magnificently towards the end of his career. With numerous variations the dramatic romance maintained itself on the stage till the closing of the theatres in 1642. After that it may be said to have disappeared, though the tragi-comic element was indispensable to the Sentimental comedy of the eighteenth century and the serious play of modern times, which are, in Sidney's words, "neither right tragedies nor right comedies." In these, however, the whole atmosphere and technique had altered so greatly as to obscure their relationship with the older form.

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.

12.7 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.

12.7.1 Closet Drama

Closet drama a play (sometimes also called a dramatic poem) designed to be read rather than performed. The term may also apply to a play which was intended to be performed but hardly ever is, and yet has survived as a piece of worthwhile literature. Well-known examples are: Milton's *Samson Agonistes* (I671); Landor's *Count Julian (1812)*; Byron's *Manfred (1817)*; Shelley's *Cenci* (1819); Keats's *Otho the Great* (18r9); Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* (1820); Swinburne's *Bothwell* (1874); and Hardy's *The Dynasts* (1904, 1906, 1908)

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.”

12.7.2 History Play

They are also known as Chronicle Play. These plays were dramatic works based on the historical materials in the English Chronicles by Raphael Holinshed and others. They achieved high popularity late in the sixteenth century, when the patriotic fervor following the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 fostered a demand for plays dealing with English history. The early chronicle plays presented a loosely knit series of events during the reign of a English king and depended for effect mainly on a bustle of stage battles, pageantry, and spectacle. Christopher Marlowe, however, in his *Edward II (1592*) selected and rearranged materials from Holinshed's Chronicles to com-pose a unified drama of character, and Shakespeare's series of chronicle plays, encompassing the succession of English kings from Richard II to Henry VIII, includes such major artistic achievements as *Richard II, 1 Henry IV, 2 Henry IV, and Henry V*.

The Elizabethan chronicle plays are sometimes called **history plays**. This latter term, however, is often applied more broadly to any drama based: mainly on historical materials, such as Shakespeare's Roman plays *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, and including such recent examples as Arthur Miller's *The Crucible (1953*). which treats the Salem witch trials of 1692, and Robert Bolt's *A Man for All Seasons (1962*), about the sixteenth-century judge, author, and martyr Sir Thomas More. G. B. Shaw titled one of his plays, which dealt with historical matters, *St. Joan: A Chronicle Play in Six Sense* (1923). The best known examples of history plays are those written by Shakespeare e.g. *Richard II, Henry IV, Julius Caesar e*tc. Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II* is another example which was influential in the development of historical plays.

12.7.3 Masque

Saintsbury defines a Masque as "a dramatic entertainment in which plot, character, and even to a great extent dialogue, are subordinated on the one hand to spectacular illustration, and on the other to musical accompaniment." It was a medley of music, elaborate scenic effects, and dancing, woven around a fairy tale, myth or allegory. It was of Italian origin, and was introduced into England in the early years of the sixteenth century. The earliest account of an English Masque occurs in Hall's *Chronicle* for the year 1512: "On the day of Epiphany at night, the King [Henry VII], with eleven others, was disguised after the manner of Italy, called a Mask, a thing not seen before in England; they were apparelled in garments long and broad, wrought all with gold, with visors and caps of gold; and after the banquet done these Maskers came in with six gentlemen disguised in silk, bearing staff-torches, and desired the ladies to dance: some were content, and some that knew the fashion of it refused, because it was not a thing commonly seen. And after they danced and shared together, as the fashion of the masks is, they took their leave and departed; and so did the Queen and all the ladies." Here are the features of an early Masque clearly set forth: vizards or (masks), elaborate costumes, and dancing.

Later Development

The Masque developed into something like a splendid modern ballet, with the additional attractions of beautiful speeches and songs. It attained a high degree of perfection in the reign of James I. It was a favourite form of composition with Ben Jonson, as it allowed his imagination and taste for the magnificent to have full play. Its main features may be summarized as follows:-

a) The characters are deities of classical mythology, nymphs, and personified abstractions like Love, Delight, Harmony, etc.

b) The number of characters is restricted to six.

c) The scenes are laid in ideal regions, such as Olympus, Arcadia, the Fortunate Isles.

d) Dances of various kinds are introduced at appropriate places.

e) The scenery and costumes are very elaborate.

f) Frequently a comic interlude is introduced, called the Anti-Masque, forming a humorous counterpart to the main plot.

g) The Masque is about as long as a single Act of one of Shakes Shakespeare's plays.

It's Decline

The Masque was a costly form of entertainment, designed either for presentation at court or to grace a festive occasion at a nobleman's house. Often it was performed as part of the celebrations at a wedding in a great family. The marriage of Ferdinand and Miranda in Shakespeare's *Tempest* is celebrated with a Masque, as that of the Earl of Essex and Lady Frances Howard was in real life. The patronage of James I and his Court helped to popularize the form in England, but on the King's death in 1625 it fell on lean times. Its novelty had worn off, and the enormous cost of production was an additional objection. Shirley's *Triumph of Peace was* produced at a cost of 21,000 an outlay which could not, as now, be recovered by frequent performances to large paying audiences.

More and more attention was paid to elaborate dresses and scenic effects, and less to the literary qualities of the text, so that there was nothing to give such productions any permanence. For these reasons the Masque had but a short period of glory and is now only a historical curiosity, though in its great days not only Jonson and Shirley but Sidney. Beaumont, Fletcher, Daniel, Chapman, Marston and Carew had used their gifts in its service. It would be impossible to leave the subject without a reference to Milton's *Comus*, which he described as "a Maske." It was performed at the Michaelmas festivities at Ludlow Castle in 1634, before the Earl of Bridgewater, and was acted by the Earl's children. It was actually a family entertainment, for the subject was suggested by an adventure which the children had when they had been compelled to spend the night in a forest on their way home from a visit. Though it had music specially composed for it, and contained songs and dances, it was really of a very different character from the Masques we have been considering, particularly in the superb poetry which has made it immortal.Ben Jonson developed the antimasque which served as a countertype to the elegance, order and pomp of the masque form.

12.7.4 Melodrama

"Melos" is Greek for song and the term "melodrama" was originally applied to all musical plays, including opera. In early-nineteenth-century London, many plays were produced with a musical accompaniment that (as in modern motion pictures) served simply to fortify the emotional tone of the various scenes; the procedure was developed in part to circumvent the Licensing Act (1737)) which allowed "legitimate" plays only as a monopoly of the Drury Lane and Covent Garden theaters, but permitted' musical entertainments elsewhere. The term "melodrama"" is now often applied to some of the typical plays, especially during the Victorian Period, that were written to be produced to musical accompaniment.

The Victorian melodrama can be said to bear the relation to tragedy that *farce* does to comedy. (Typically, the protagonists are flat types: the hero is greathearted, the heroine pure, and the villain a monster of malignity. (The sharply contrasted good guys and bad guys of the movie western and some television dramas are modern derivatives from standard types in the old melodramas.) The plot revolves round malevolent intrigue and violent action, while the credibility of both character and plot is often sacrificed for violent effect and emotional opportunism. Nineteenth-century melodramas such as *Under the Gaslight* (1867) and the temperance play *Ten Nights in a Barroom* (1858) are still sometimes produced for thrills, however, than for laughs.

The terns "melodrama" and "melodramatic" are also in an extended sense, applied to any literary work or episode, whether in drama or prose fiction, that relies on implausible events and sensational action. Melodrama, in this sense, was standard fare in cowboy-and-Indian and cops-and-robber types of silent films, and remains alive and flourishing in current cinematic and television productions.

12.7.5 Miracle plays and Morality plays

These are all types of late medieval drama, written in a variety of verse forms. The miracle play had as its subject either a story from the Bible, or else the life and martyrdom of a saint. In the usage of some historians, however, "miracle play" denotes only dramas based on saints' lives, and the term mystery play is applied to dramas based on the Bible. "Mystery" is used in an archaic sense (probably derived from the Latin ministerium, "work," "occupation") of the "trade" conducted by each of the medieval guilds which sponsored these plays.

The plays representing biblical narratives originated within the church in about the tenth century, in dramatizations of brief parts of the Latin liturgical service, called tropes,

especially the "Quem quaeritis" (“Whom are you seeking”) trope portraying the visit of the three Marys to the tomb of Christ Gradually these evolved into complete plays which were written in English instead of in Latin, produced under the auspices of the various trade guilds, and acted on stages set outside the church. The miracle plays written in Enland are of unknown authorship. In the fourteenth century there developed in cities such as York and Chester the practice, on the feast of Corpus Christi (sixty days after Easter), of putting on great "cycles" of such plays, representing crucial events in the biblical history of mankind from the Creation and Fall of man, through the Nativity, Crucifixion, and Resurrection of Christ, to the Last Judgment. The precise way that the plays were staged is a matter of scholarly debate, but it is widely agreed that each scene was played on a separate "pageant wagon" which was drawn, in sequence, to one after an- other fixed station in a city, at each of which some parts of the cycle were enacted. The biblical texts were greatly expanded in these plays, and the unknown authors’ added scenes, comic as well as serious, of their own invention.

Morality plays were dramatized allegories of a representative Christian life in the plot form of a quest for salvation, in which the crucial events are temptations, sinning, and the climactic confrontation with death. The usual protagonist represents Mankind, or Everyman; among the other characters are personifications of virtues, vices, and Death, as well as well as angels and demons who contest for the prize of the soul of Mankind. A character known as the Vice often played the role of the tempter in a fashion both sinister and comic; he is regarded by some literary historians as a precursor both of the cynical, ironic villain and of some of the comic figures in Elizabethan drama, including Shakespeare's Falstaff. The best-known morality play is the fifteenth-century Everyman, which is still given an occasional performance; other notable examples written in the same Century, are *The Castle of Perseverance* and *Mankind*.

12.7.6 Interludes

Interlude (Latin, "between the play") is a term applied to a variety of short stage entertainments, such as secular farces and witty dialogues with a religious or political point. In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, these little dramas were performed by bands of professional actors; it is believed that they were often put on between the courses of a feast or between the acts of a longer play. Among the better-known interludes are John Heywood’s farces of the first half of the sixteenth century, especially *The Four P* (that is, the Palmer, the

Pardoner, the Pothecary, and the Peddler, who engage in a lying contest), and *Johan Johan the Husband, Tyb His Wife*, and *Sir John the Priest*.

Until the middle of the twentieth century, concern with medieval drama was scholarly rather than critical. Since that time a number of studies have dealt with the relationships of the texts to the religious and secular culture of medieval Europe, and have stressed the artistic excellence and power of the plays themselves.

12.7.7 Problem play

A type of drama that was popularized by the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen, In problem plays, the situation faced by the protagonist is put forward by the author as a representative instance of a contemporary social problem; often the dramatist manages by the use of a character who speaks for the author, or by the evolution of the plot, or both-to propose a solution to the problem which is at odds with prevailing opinion. The issue may be the inadequate autonomy, scope, and dignity allotted to women in the middle-class nineteenth-century family (Ibsen's *A Doll's House, 1879*); or the morality of prostitution, regarded as a typical product of the economic system in a capitalist society (George Bernard Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession, 1898*); or the crisis in racial and ethnic relations in present-day America (in numerous current dramas and films). 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*. 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.*

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 not incorporated into a plot but expounded in the give- and-take of a sustained debate among the characters. See Shaw's *Getting Married*, and Act III of his (Man and Superman; also his book on Ibsen's plays, *The Quintessence of lbsenism (1891*).

In a specialized application, the term problem plays is sometimes applied to a group of Shakespeare's plays, also called "bitter comedies" especially Troilus *and Cressida, Measure for Measure, and All's Well That Ends Well*-which explore ignoble aspects of human nature, and in which the resolution of the plot seems to some readers to be problematic, in that it does not settle or solve, except superficially, the moral problems raised in the play. By extension, the term came to be applied also to other Shakespearean plays which explore the dark side of human nature, or which seem to leave unresolved the issues that arise in the course of the action.

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.

12.8 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

12.9 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

12.10. 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 13 ELEMENTS OF DRAMA

13.1 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.

13.2 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

13.3 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.

13.4 ANAGNORISIS

Anagnorisis is a literary term that refers to the moment in a story when a character makes a critical discovery or realization, often leading to a dramatic turning point in the plot. It is derived from the Greek word "*anagnorisis*," which means "recognition" or "discovery." Anagnorisis can occur when a character suddenly understands their true identity, discovers an important truth about another character, or realizes the significance of past events.

This revelation usually leads to heightened tension and conflict, propelling the story toward its climax. Anagnorisis is commonly found in Greek tragedies and Shakespearean plays, but it can also be used in other forms of literature such as novels, short stories, and films. Storytellers use this literary device to reveal a character's true identity or uncover the true nature of a narrative situation. Anagnorisis acts as a turning point in the plot of a story and often precedes a moment of peripeteia, meaning a sudden reversal of fortune. Aristotle

described anagnorisis as an essential element of a complex plot with a character transitioning from ignorance to knowledge.

This device was first explored at length by Aristotle in his *Poetics* (circa 335 BCE), the earliest surviving work of dramatic and literary theory. The philosopher discusses anagnorisis in great detail, defining it as "a change [that] occurs from ignorance to knowledge, creating love or hate between the individuals doomed by the poet for bad or good fortune." This change generally occurs at a turning point and is often followed by a reversal of fortune, or peripeteia.

For Aristotle and his audience, anagnorisis was a crucial element of classical Greek tragedy. This moment gives the protagonist insight into both their own character and the dramatic situation itself, thus pushing the plot to its necessary resolution. According to Aristotle, anagnorisis facilitates more complex narratives and characterizations, thus leading to superior tragedies.

As such, he believed the presence of anagnorisis in a tragedy was superior to its absence. For example, Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* would be a superior tragedy to Euripides's *Medea* in Aristotle's eyes. In the former, Oedipus unwittingly kills his father and marries his mother, later learning the truth of his identity and thus the consequences of his actions. In the latter, Medea knows her children are he

The moment of illumination that anagnorisis brings allows the protagonist to experience an important new insight into their own nature, the situation, and/or human nature itself. This can serve as a crucial moment of characterization as both the audience and character finally understand who the protagonist really is as a person. Anagnorisis also plays an important role in plot resolution. As it tends to occur during the climax of a plot, the knowledge it imparts allows the plot's complexities to be resolved in a satisfactory way.

In tragedies, anagnorisis is the moment when the protagonist realizes their own tragic flaw. In Shakespeare's play *Othello*, this kind of revelation occurs after Othello kills his wife Desdemona, believing she was unfaithful. He later discovers that she was innocent and he was deceived and manipulated by Iago. Only then does Othello recognize the truth of the situation and how jealousy led to his downfall.

Anagnorisis is an extremely effective storytelling technique, so it should be no surprise that it can be found in countless pieces of literature. Let's look at a few of them including an iconic example of anagnorisis in Oedipus Rex.

Sophocles, Oedipus Rex

This play by Sophocles has perhaps the most famous anagnorisis of all time. The grand realization? Oedipus finds out that he has in fact killed his dad and, to make matters worse, married his mother, Yikes.

It's a pretty huge anagnorisis completed with a pretty huge reaction: Oedipus blinds himself.

Shakespeare, Macbeth

Macbeth believes he's essentially invisible: he's been told that he can be killed by no one born of a woman. So, he need not worry of any danger from anyone.
Well, Macbeth realizes there's an unfortunate loophole: Macduff was removed from his mother through a caesarian process. Macduff can kill him.

Charles Dickens', *Great Expectations*

In Chapter 39 of Dickens's novel, protagonist Pip discovers that his secret benefactor is not the wealthy and eccentric Miss Havisham, as he believed, but the convict Abel Magwitch who Pip helped escape prison near the opening of the novel. Pip muses:

For an hour or more, I remained too stunned to think; and it was not until I began to think, that I began fully to know how wrecked I was, and how the ship in which I had sailed was gone to pieces.

In this moment of anagnorisis, Pip's discovery of his newfound wealth's true source illuminates who he really is and the devastating nature of his situation. Because his money comes from criminal enterprise, he cannot become an upper-class gentleman nor be allowed to marry his beloved Estrella.

William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*

In Act III, Scene 2 of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale,* the moment of anagnorisis is relayed to the audience by various Gentlemen of the Court, who tell the following story:

That which you hear you'll swear you see, there is such unity in the proofs. The mantle of Queen Hermione's, her jewel about the neck of it, the letters of Antigonus found with it, which they know to be his character; the majesty of the creature in resemblance of the mother, the affection of nobleness which nature shows above her breeding, and many other evidences proclaim her with all certainty to be the king's daughter.

These gentlemen explain how Perdita, the King of Sicily's daughter, was raised as a poor shepherdess, unaware of her true parentage until she was found and claimed as royal. Much of the play's plot concerns her romance with Prince Florizel, initially forbidden because of her presumed lack of nobility. When the gentlemen reveal she is truly a princess, the audience understands her true identity, and the plot ultimately ends with a happy marriage

13.5 CATHARSIS

While defining tragedy, Aristotle writes that the function of tragedy is to arouse the emotions of pity and fear, and in this way to affect the *Katharsis* of these emotions. Aristotle has used the term Katharsis only once, but no phrase, probably, in ancient or modern literature, has been handled so frequently by commentators and critics, and by poets. Most varied and ingenuous explanations have been given. The controversy from the fact that Aristotle himself has not explained what exactly he meant by the word, nor do we get any direct aid from the *Poetics* in interpreting the Greek phrase. For this reason, help and guidance has to be taken from his other works, more especially from his *Politics* and his second *Ethics*. Further, the Greek word *Katharsis* has three meanings. It means, "*purgation*"', "*purification*", and "*clarification"*, and each critic has used the word in one or the other of these varied senses, and has reached accordingly at a different conclusion. AII agree that Tragedy arouses fear and pity, but there are sharp differences as to the process, the way by which the rousing of these emotions gives pleasure. We would first examine the different interpretations of the word Catharsis, and then give the interpretation which seems most appealing and convincing.

13.5.1 The Purgation Theory

Catharsis or katharsis has been taken to be a medical metaphor, 'purgation', denoting a pathological effect on the soul analogous to the effect of medicine on the body. Some critics think it as homeopathic treatment with the like curing the like, and thus, it is said, the rousing of pity and fear results in the, 'purgation', of these emotions. This view is borne out by a

passage in the *Politic*s where Aristotle refers to religious frenzy being cured by certain tunes which excite religious frenzy. In Tragedy, "pity and fear, artificially stirred, expel the latent pity and fear which we bring with us from real life." Such incidental emotions as anxiety, self-pity, etc., are also quieted. In our sympathy for the sufferer on the stage, we forget our own troubles and worries. "In the pleasurable calm which follows when the passion is spent, an emotional cure is wrought." Used in the medical sense, Katharsis implies relief following previous excitation of the tragic emotions. Important critics like Twining and Barney (1957), are also of the view that Katharsis is a kind Homeopathic treatment. Freud and other psychologists also support this

In the neo-classical era, Catharsis was taken to be an allopathic treatment with the unlike curing unlike, in this respect, they followed the lead given by Giraldi Cinthio of 16th century Italy. Thus the arousing of pity and fear was supposed to bring about the purgation or, *'evacuation' of other emotions, like anger, pride etc.* The spectacle of suffering arouses our pity and fear and we are 'purged' of the emotions that caused the suffering. If the suffering is caused by emotions, like anger, hatred, or impiety towards the gods, we are 'purged' of such undesirable emotions, because we realize their evil consequences. "*We learn from the terrible fates of evil men to avoid the vices they manifest."* Thomas Taylor in his introduction to the Poetics (1818) holds this View.

13.5.2 Psychological Interpretation

E.L. Lucas rejects the idea that Katharsis as used by Aristotle is a medical metaphor, and says that, "the theatre is not a hospital," Both Lucas and Herbert Reed regard it as a kind of safety valve. Pity and fear are aroused, we give free play to these emotions as we cannot do in real life, and this safe and free outlet of these emotions is followed by emotional relief. In real life they are repressed, and in the theatre the free indulgence in these emotions, aroused by the suffering of the hero, is safe and brings relief to our pent up souls. I.A, Richards' approach to the process is also psychological. Fear is the impulse to withdraw and pity is the impulse to approach. Both these impulses are harmonized and blended in tragedy, and this balance brings relief and repose.

Thus according to the purification' theory, Katharsis implies that our emotions are purified of excess and defect, are reduced to intermediate state, trained and directed towards the right objects at the right time, and, in this way, we are made virtuous and good. Katharsis in this

sense is a kind of moral conditioning when witnessing a tragedy; the spectator learns the proper use of pity, fear, and similar emotions.

13.6 COMIC RELIEF

Comic relief is the introduction of comic characters, speeches, or scenes in a serious or tragic work, especially a drama. Such elements were almost universal in Elizabethan tragedy. Sometimes they occur merely as episodes of dialogue or horseplay for purposes of reducing the intensity of tension and adding variety. In more carefully wrought plays, however, they are integrated with the plot, in a way that counterpoints and enhances the serious or tragic significance. Examples of such complex uses of comic elements are the gravediggers in Hamlet, the scene of the drunken porter after the murder of the king in Macbeth, the Falstaff scenes in Henry IV, and the roles of Mercutio and the old nurse in Romeo and Juliet.

Self Assessment Questions

1. Define anagnorisis. Give some examples.

2. What do you understand by the term catharsis?

3. Define comic relief.

4. Explain The Purgation Theory.

5. Give Psychological Interpretation of Catharsis.

13.7 DRAMATIC STRUCTURE

Dramatic structure is a term describing the rules that govern the flow of a story, which are designed primarily to make stories seem more dramatically satisfying to an audience. There are several approaches to dramatic structure, and they can vary a lot in terms of complexity and popularity. Most approaches are generally focused on the best ways to initially capture an audience's attention, keep them interested once they're engaged, and then send them away with a satisfying conclusion of some kind. The word "dramatic" can sometimes suggest that this term would only apply to stories designed for dramatic mediums, such as plays and films, but in reality, the term is also used very often to describe the structuring of novels or short stories, and often the same approaches to story structure can apply without modification to almost any medium.

It is the plot structure of a dramatic work. Many scholars beginning with Aristotle have analyzed 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."

13.8 PLOT

Plot derives from the Old French word *complot*, which refers to a secret plan or conspiracy. Plots have long been a central component of storytelling, with Greek philosopher Aristotle observing in the fourth century BCE that plot, which he called *mythos*, is the "soul" of all tragedy.

The plot of a story is the sequence of events that shape a broader narrative, with every event causing or affecting each other. In other words, story plot is a series of causes-and-effects which shape the story as a whole. Plot *is not* merely a story summary: it must include causation. The novelist E. M. Forster sums it up perfectly:

"The king died and then the queen died is a story. The king died, and then the queen died of grief, is a plot." —E. M. Forster

In other words, the premise doesn't become a plot until the words "of grief" adds causality. Without including "of grief" in the sentence, the queen could have died for any number of

reasons, like assassination or suicide. Grief not only provides plot structure to the story, it also introduces what the story's theme might be.

Some additional key details about plot:

1. The plot of a story explains not just *what* happens, but *how* and *why* the major events of the story take place.

2. Plot is a key element of novels, plays, most works of nonfiction, and many (though not all) poems. Since ancient times, writers have worked to create theories that can help categorize different types of plot structures.

13.8.1 Plot vs. Story

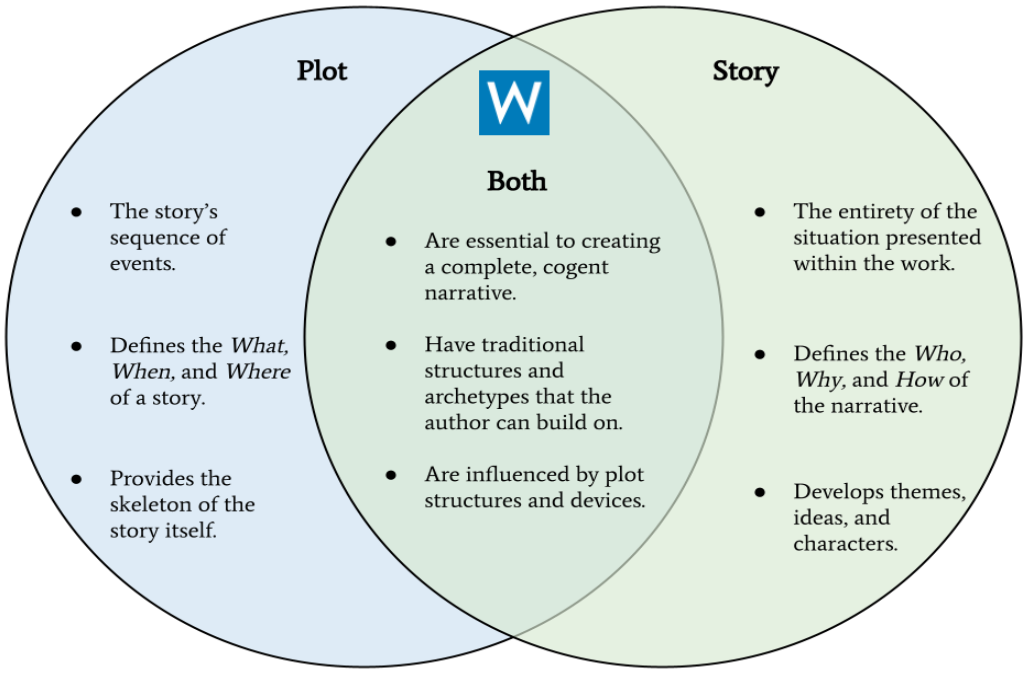
Perhaps the best way to say what a plot is would be to compare it to a story. The two terms are closely related to one another, and as a result, many people often use the terms interchangeably—but they're actually different. A story is a series of events; it tells us *what happened*. A plot, on the other hand, tells us *how* the events are connected to one another and *why* the story unfolded in the way that it did. In *Aspects of the Novel*, E.M. Forster uses the following examples to distinguish between story and plot:

> . "The king died, and then the queen died" is a story. "The king died, and then the queen died of grief" is a plot. The time-sequence is preserved, but the sense of causality overshadows it. Or again: "The queen died, no one knew why, until it was discovered that it was through grief at the death of the king." This is a plot with a mystery in it.

Therefore, when examining a plot, it's helpful to look for events that change the direction of the story and consider how one event leads to another.

There are many ways to develop the plot of a story, and writers have been experimenting with plot structures for millennia. Consider the following structures as you attempt to write your own stories, as they may help you find a solution to the problems you encounter in your story writing.

The following van diagram can help in clarifying the core concept of plot and story candidly.



PLOT-STORY DIAGRAM

13.8.2 Plot Structure: Aristotle's Triangle Theory

The oldest recorded discussion of plot structures comes from Aristotle's *Poetics* (circa 335 B.C.). In *Poetics*, Aristotle represents the plot of a story as a narrative triangle, suggesting that stories provide linear narratives that resolve certain conflicts in three parts: a beginning, middle, and end.

To Aristotle, the beginning should exist independent of any prior events: it should be a self-sustaining unit of the story without prompting the reader to ask "why?" or "how?" The middle should be a logical continuation of the events from the beginning, expanding upon the story's conflicts and tragedies. Finally, the end should provide a neat resolution, without suggesting further events.

Obviously, many stories complicate this basic plot triangle, and it lacks some of the finer details of plot structure. One way that Aristotle has been developed further is through Freytag's Pyramid.

13.8.3 Plot Structures: Freytag's Pyramid

Modern interpretations and understandings of plot are largely based on the 1863 model devised by German author Gustav Freytag, called Freytag's Pyramid. Freytag based it on Aristotle's analysis of dramatic tragedy. Most plotlines follow the same basic structure made of five essential ingredients.

Freytag's Pyramid builds upon Aristotle's *Poetics* by expanding the structural elements of plot. This pyramid consists of five discrete parts:

Exposition: This is where the readers are introduced to any relevant information about the main character(s), such as their personality traits, back-story and their relationship with other characters. The setting (place and time) where the story will take place is also established alongside any other contextual or background information necessary for the understanding of the story. This is where we establish the 'normal' lives of our main characters. This is also where the dramatic question or central conflict of the story is planted.

Rising Action: This is characterized by the occurrence of an inciting incident. The inciting incident is a turning point where some sort of extraordinary complication that does not occur in the 'normal' life of our main character happens. The inciting incident sets our story into motion.

This inciting incident triggers a chain of events where the main characters(s) are forced into challenging situations where they must overcome mental or physical obstacles. The reader also realizes the consequences of failing to overcome these obstacles for the main character, a realization that leads to a build-up of tension and anticipation within the readers.

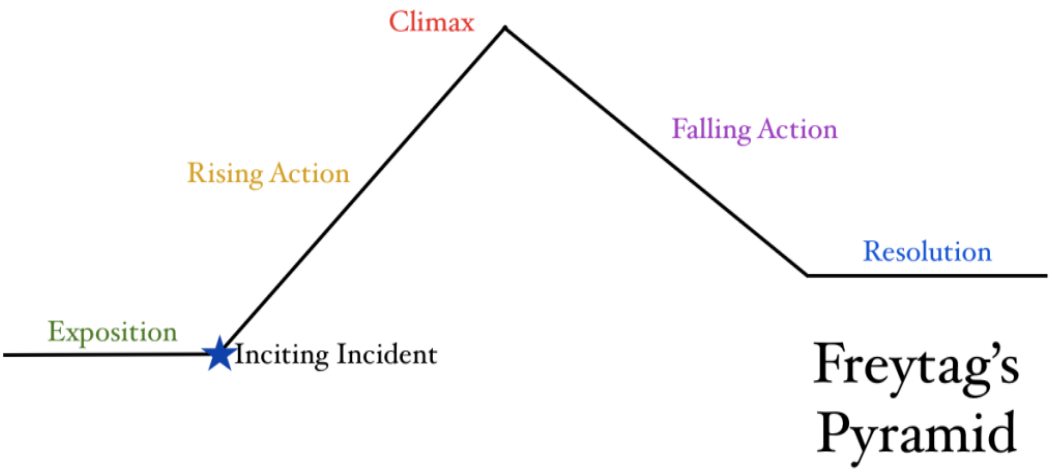
Climax: This is the big moment! All the challenging situations and obstacles that our protagonist overcomes lead up to the climax, where the protagonist comes face to face with the central conflict of the story. Hence, this is where the tension and conflict reach their peak in the story and push the readers to the edge. This is everything that the readers have been waiting for, and everything that the writer has been promising.

This is where the protagonist makes a major decision that seals their fate and solidifies the direction the story's ending is going to take - whether it is going to be a happy ending or a tragic one.

Falling Action: This bridges the gap between the climax and the resolution where the protagonist begins to experience the consequences of the climax and the character's actions. This stage is characterized by a rapid decline in tension and drama, as we move towards the resolution.

This is also the writer's opportunity to tie up any loose ends and conclude any subplots or minor conflicts.

Denouement/Resolution: This is the official end to the protagonist's journey, where they have reached their destination by answering the dramatic question and ending the central conflict of the story. The final fate of our characters is revealed and a new sense of 'normal' is established. Some stories may contain information about the futures of our characters. This is the happy (or tragic) ending of the story.



Examples of Plot in Literature

Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre*

- Exposition: Bronte establishes Jane as a headstrong, resilient orphan who attends a sinister boarding school.
- Rising Action: Now a young woman, Jane arrives at Thornfield Hall, the grand manor of the coarse Mr. Rochester, to work as a governess. Jane and Rochester develop romantic feelings for one another, and they get engaged.

- Climax: Jane and Rochester are about to marry when Jane learns that Rochester's first wife is not dead as previously assumed; she is alive and violently insane. Long ago, Rochester imprisoned her in her third-floor bedroom at Thornfield, where she remains.

- Falling Action: Jane leaves Thornfield Hall and begins a new life with her cousins. She comes into a great inheritance left to her by her deceased father.

- Denouement: With Rochester's voice haunting her, Jane returns to Thornfield Hall and finds the place in ruins after Mrs. Rochester set the house on fire and committed suicide. Mr. Rochester has lost his hand and eyesight. With Mrs. Rochester dead, he proposes to Jane, and she accepts.

Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*

One of the most famous works by Woolf, the novel spans a single day in the life of high-society woman Clarissa Dalloway as she prepares for a dinner party. *Mrs. Dalloway* is an example of a story that relies primarily on exposition and commentary while having enough plot to keep the story moving forward.

- Exposition: Clarissa Dalloway and the people in her orbit—including the sensitive poet and WWI veteran Septimus Smith—face a seemingly normal day in June 1923.

- Rising Action: As Clarissa makes plans for a formal party that evening, her friends go about their respective days. Each character reflects on their life and choices.

- Climax: Tormented by posttraumatic stress disorder and fearing that his soul is tainted, Septimus commits suicide.

- Falling Action: At her party, Clarissa learns of Septimus's suicide and excuses herself to mull over his death. She begins to identify with Septimus' desire to die and feels content with his decision because she thinks it allowed him to save his soul.

- Denouement: Clarissa goes back to the party. Her acceptance of Septimus's death brings her happiness, and it is palpable to the others in attendance.

13.9 COMMON PLOT DEVICES

The plot of a story is influenced by many factors. While plot structures give the framework for the story itself, the author must employ plot devices to keep the story moving, otherwise the rising action will never become a climax. These plot devices ensure that your reader will keep reading, and that your story will deepen and complicate the themes it seeks to engage

In *Poetics*, Aristotle describes three plot devices which are essential to most stories. These are:

Anagnorisis *(Recognition):*

Luke, I am your father! Anagnorisis is the moment in which the protagonist goes from ignorance to knowledge. Often preceding the story's climax, anagnorisis is the key piece of information that propels the protagonist into resolving the story's conflict.

Pathos (Suffering):

Aristotle defines pathos as "a destructive or painful action." This can be physical pain, such as death or severe wounds, but it can also be an emotional or existential pain. Regardless, Aristotle contends that all stories confront extreme pain, and that this pain is essential for the propulsion of the plot. (This is different from the rhetorical device "pathos," in which a rhetorician seeks to appeal to the audience's emotions.)

Peripeteia (Reversal):

A Peripeteia is a moment in which bad fortunes change to good, or good fortunes change to bad. In other words, this is a reversal of the situation. Often accompanied by anagnorisis, Peripeteia is often the outcome of the story's climax, since the climax decides whether the protagonist's story ends in comedy or tragedy.

13.10 PLOT DEVICES FOR STORY STRUCTURE

The plot of a story will gain structure from the use of these devices.

Back-story:

Back-story refers to important moments that have occurred prior to the main story. They happen before the story's exposition, and while they sometimes change the direction of the story, they more often provide historical parallels and key bits of characterization. Sometimes, a story will refer to its own back-story via flashback.

Deus Ex Machina:

A deus ex machina occurs when the protagonist's fate is changed due to circumstances outside of their control. The Gods may intervene, the antagonist may suddenly perish, or the story's conflict resolves itself. Generally, deus ex machina is viewed as a "cop out" that prevents the protagonist from experiencing the full growth necessary to complete their journey. However, this risky device may pay off, especially in works of comedy or absurdism.

Medias Res:

From the Latin "in the middle of things," a story is "in media res" when it starts in the middle. On Page 1, word 1, the story starts somewhere in the middle of the rising action, hooking the reader in despite the lack of context. Eventually, the story will properly introduce the characters and take us to the beginning of the conflict, but "in media res" is one way to generate immediate interest in the story.

13.11 ACT AND SCENES

Act is a major division in the action of a play. In England this division was introduced by Elizabethan dramatists, who imitated ancient Roman plays by structuring the action into five acts. Late in the nineteenth century a number of writers followed the example of Chekhov and Ibsen by constructing plays in four acts. In the twentieth century the most common form for traditional non-musical dramas has been three acts.

Acts are often subdivided into scenes, which in modern plays usually consist of units of action in which there is no change of place or break in the continuity of time. (Some recent plays dispense with the division into acts and are structured as a sequence of scenes, or episodes.) In the conventional theater with a proscenium arch that frames the front of the stage, the end of a scene is usually indicated by a dropped curtain or a dimming of the lights, and the end of an act by a dropped curtain and an intermission.

13.12 SOLILOQUY AND ASIDE

The Soliloquy, as we have already said, is an actor's secret thoughts uttered aloud on the stage to acquaint the audience with what is passing in his mind. It is not, however, supposed to be heard by anyone, and is spoken when no other actor is present. Drama is make-believe in which. to the persons in the play, the audience is not supposed to exist. The use of the

Soliloquy depends I on this assumption. It is often attacked as an unnatural device, for nobody in actual life ever puts his private thoughts into audible speech when he is alone. No one would ever, like Hamlet, make a long speech to himself on the question of suicide.

The Soliloquy is not, however, meant to be treated as speech. It is merely a conventional way of conveying to an audience something that it could not gather in any other way. The audience knows that it is unreal, but 1t accepts this and many other conventions in the drama, and indeed in all forms of literature äs, for instance, it accepts the fact that a room on the stage has only three walls. Nobody would derive much enjoyment from a play if he did not, to some extent, allow himself to be deceived ör to eke out the dramatist's limited resources with his own imagination. The Soliloquy demands this "willing suspension of disbelief."

The aside is a passing thought uttered aloud by an actor in front of other characters on the stage, who are not supposed to hear it. It is the shortest form of the Soliloquy and serves a like purpose. It is as unnatural as the Soliloquy, but has to be used for the same reason The soliloquy continued to be employed, particularly in farce and melodrama, till near the close .of the nineteenth century. Both it and the aside have practically vanished from the modern drama with its insistence upon the realistic. What they used to convey in the old days must now be brought out in the dialogue or by some look or action on thę part of the player çoncerned. The Soliloquy, however, has an honoured place in literature, and some of the noblest passage in Shakespeare is cast in that form. Hamlet s "To be or not to be," Othello’s “Put out light, and then put out the light”. Macbeths “it werę done when 'tis done”, and Henry V's "What infinite heart's ease must kings neglect,' are passages which, besides possessing profound psychological interest, are of the highest poetic quality. They still provide great moments in the theatre, and are considered a crucial test of an actor's powers and interpretation.

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 Aristotle’s division of plot.

13.13 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.

13.14 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.

E. M. Forster. *Aspects of the Novel*. 1927

Aristotle. *Aristotle's Poetics*. 1961

Gustav Freytag. *Freytag's Technique of the Drama*. 1863

Christopher Booker. *The Seven Basic Plots*. 2004

13.15 TERMINAL AND MODEL QUESTIONS

1. Write short notes on:

- Anagnorisis
- Catharsis

2. What is Soliloquy?

3.Explain Freytag’s Plot Structure.