

**English department**

**Third year**

# **History of English literature**

## **Lectures**

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## **The Beginning of English**

### **Old and Middle English (600-1485)**

#### **Introduction:**

English literature is a literature produced in England , from the introduction of Old English by the Anglo-Saxons in the 5<sup>th</sup>-C, to the present .

It is the literature written in English from anywhere, not just the literature of England, so that it includes writers from Scotland, the whole of Ireland, Wales, as well as literature in English from former British colonies, including the USA. But until the early 19<sup>th</sup>-C, it just deals with literature from Britain and Ireland written in English; then America starts to produce major writers.

In the 20<sup>th</sup>-C, America and Ireland produced many of the most significant works of literature in English, and after World War II writers from the former British Empire also began to produce major works of literature.

The first literature in English goes back to the period between about AD (410) and (1066). These are Anglo- Saxon times and are known as the early medieval period. In (410) the Romans left Britain, and in (1066) the Norman Conquest began the late medieval period of history.

It was a time of wars and invasions- Britain was invaded by many peoples from Europe: Angles, Saxon, Jutes, Vikings and finally Normans. These invasions left many traces in the form of castles and towns, as well as in culture and language.

The language known as Old English is the language of the first literature in English. But it was a long time before it was actually written down: the first stories and poems were spoken, and we don't know exactly when these stories were first told.

There were two cultures through the Anglo-Saxon period: the Christian culture, which had arrived in England in 597 with Saint Augustine, and the heroic culture, of leaders and heroes who defended their lands against invaders.

The Norman Conquest at the battle of Hastings in (1066) was the last successful invasion of Britain. The Normans took power, and William the Conqueror became the king of England. William tried to bring peace to the country after many centuries of wars and invasions but didn't always succeed. The Normans brought with them many French influences, and the French language began to mix with Old English into a more modern English. Scandinavian influences were also strong and Latin was still the language of Church, so there were many influences on English language and culture. The first parliament was in (1265), and English became the language of national law in (1362). The Magna Carta of (1215) reduced the power of the king, giving more power and property rights to aristocrats. The city of London became the capital of the country, and the local dialects of English became the main spoken form of English, although local dialects remained strong, as they still do today. The subjects of the first literature are subjects which are familiar even now: war, religion, personal sadness and happiness. It was the Christian monks in the monasteries who first write down the words of the early literature- they were the only people who could read and write, and for many centuries they guarded culture and learning. Most of the texts from this period are anonymous , but one or two names are attached to texts. The very first fragment is called '*Caedmon's Hymn*'. So, '*Hymn*' is the first song of praise in English literature. Nearly

all Anglo-Saxon authors are anonymous: twelve are known by name from Medieval sources, but only four of those are known by their vernacular works with any certainty: Caedmon, Bede, Alfred the Great, and Cynewulf. Caedmon is the earliest English poet whose name is known. Caedmon's only known surviving work is *Caedmon's Hymn*, which probably dates from the late 7<sup>th</sup>-C. The Hymn itself was composed between (658) and (680), recorded in the earlier part of the 8<sup>th</sup>-C, and survives today in at least 14 verified manuscript copies.

### **Poetry [ Beowulf and Long Poems]:**

Old English poetry falls broadly into two styles or fields of reference, the heroic Germanic and the Christian. The Anglo-Saxons were converted to Christianity after their arrival in England. Several poems are preserved in the *Exeter Book*. Two other personal but anonymous poems are: *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer* [sailor]. These are elegiac poems—the speaker is always alone, and his memory becomes very important. They are memories of old legends, old battles and old heroes. Although we know very little about the period, we don't find ideas and themes which are common in all literature, and memories are a major part of the writing. Among the anonymous religious texts which remain, the best known is *The Dream of the Rood*. The word 'rood' means cross in Old English. This poem is found not only in the *Vercelli Book* but also on a standing stone in Ruthwell in southern Scotland. The poem is also important for two reasons: it is the first of a kind of poem which became very popular in later literature, the dream vision; and *The Dream of the Rood* shows a great range of words to describe the cross of Christ, and a range of images which later poems developed. The epic poem *Beowulf* is the most famous work in Old English and has achieved a national epic status in England, despite being set in Scandinavia. *Beowulf* is the conventional title, and it is composed by an anonymous Anglo-Saxon poet, who is commonly referred to as the "Beowulf poet". This poem describes events which are part of the period's memory: invasions and battles, some historic, some legendary. The poem is set around the sixth century, but was probably not written down until the eighth century. Beowulf is the first hero in English literature, the man who can win battles and give safety to his people over a long period of time. *The battle of Maldon* is another long poem about battles and heroes. But it is much more factual, describing a real battle rather than retelling a fictional story of war. Both *The battle of Maldon* and *Beowulf* are written in rich and powerful language, full of new words, new tones and new rhythms, and with many images of light, color and action. *Beowulf*, which is about 3000 lines, is a story about a brave young man from southern Sweden. Beowulf goes to help Hrothgar, king of the Danes, who can't defend himself or his people against a terrible monster called Grendel. One night Beowulf attacks Grendel and pulls off the arm of the monster. Grendel returns to the lake where he lives, but dies there. Beowulf is then attacked by the mother of Grendel and Beowulf follows her to the bottom of the lake and kills her, too. Fifty years later, Beowulf has to defend his own people against a dragon which breathes fire. Although he kills the dragon, Beowulf himself is injured in the fight and dies. The poem has a sad ending, but the poem is a statement of heroic values and Beowulf dies a hero. Here Wiglaf reminds Beowulf of his greatest days:

Leofa Biowulf, Laest eall tela;

Swa ou on geoguofeore geara geewade

Beat ou ne alaete be oe lifeigendum

Beloved Beowulf, keep well the vow that you swore

long ago in the days of your youth, not to allow your glory to diminish as long as you lived

When Beowulf dies, Wiglaf has to continue the example for the next generation.

The *Beowulf* story is part myth, part history, but the hero is remembered as the man who can win battles and give safety to his people over a long period of time. A new translation of *Beowulf* came out in (1999) and was a great popular success. It was written by the Irish Nobel Prize winner, Seamus Heaney, and the translation won the Whitbread Book of the Year prize.

Chronicles contained a range of historical and literary accounts, and a notable example is the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. This is a collection of annals in Old English chronicling the history of the Anglo-Saxons. Nine manuscripts survive in whole or in part, though not all are of equal historical value and none of them is the original version.

The oldest seems to have been started towards the end of King Alfred's reign in the 9<sup>th</sup>-C, and the most recent was written at Peterborough Abbey in (1116).

The poem *The Battle of Maldon* also deals with history. This is the name given to a work, of uncertain date, celebrating the real Battle of Maldon of (991), at which the Anglo-Saxons failed to prevent a Viking invasion. Only 325 lines of the poem are extant; both the beginning and the ending are lost. *The Wanderer* is an Old English poem preserved only in an anthology known as the *Exeter Book*, a manuscript dating from the late 10<sup>th</sup>-C. As often the case in Anglo-Saxon verse, the composer and compiler are anonymous, and within the manuscript the poem is untitled. The *Wanderer* conveys the meditations of a solitary exile on his past glories as a warrior in his lord's band of retainers. Another poem with a religious theme is *The Seafarer*. It is also recorded in the *Exeter Book*, one of the four surviving manuscripts, and consists of 124 lines, followed by the single word "Amen". In the past it has been frequently referred to as an elegy, a poem that mourns a loss, or has the more general meaning of a simply sorrowful piece of writing. Some scholars, however, have argued that the content of the poem also links it with Sapiential Books, or Wisdom Literature. Classical antiquity was not forgotten in Anglo-Saxon England and several Old English poems are adaptations of late classical philosophical texts. The longest is King Alfred's (849–899) 9<sup>th</sup>-C, translation of *Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy*.

#### **Prose :**

Prose in Old English is represented by a large number of religious works. The imposing scholarship of monasteries in northern England in the late 7<sup>th</sup>-C, reached its peak in the Latin work *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* ( Ecclesiastic History of the English people, 731) by Bede. The great educational effort of Alfred, King of the West Saxons, in the 9<sup>th</sup>-c, produced an Old English translation of this important historical work and of many others, including *De Consolatione Philosophiae* (The Consolation of Philosophy), by Boethius. This was a significant work of largely Platonic philosophy easily adaptable to Christian thought, and it has had a great influence on English literature. Many of the earliest books were histories, rather than imaginative writings. They give us a lot of the information we have of this period. Bede, known as the Venerable Bede, was a monk who lived between (673) and (753). He wrote many books, mostly about the Bible, but he is remembered also for his *History of the English Church and People* written in Latin and completed about (731). One of the first books of history was the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. It was written over a long period of

time, and tells the history of England from the beginning of Christian times, around AD (600) to (1154). With details of invasions and battles. The themes of Old English literature are security, both for the individual and society and in religious faith. This literature gave comfort, or provided reflection. Usually the poems were sung in the hall of a castle, and these songs and poems were passed on from generation to generation before they were written down. In this way, the spoken tradition led to the first tradition of written literature. At the same time, Old English was beginning to develop into different language, called **Middle English**, closer to the English we know today.

### **English literature (1150 – 1485) :**

After the *Norman conquest* of England in (1066), the written form of the *Anglo-Saxon language* became less common, and under the influence of the new aristocracy. *Law French* became the standard language of courts, parliament, and polite society. The invaders also integrated, their language and literature mingled with that of the natives and the Norman dialects of the ruling classes. At the same time Anglo-Saxon underwent a gradual transition into *Middle-English*. Political power was no longer in English hands, so that the West Saxon literary language had no more influence than any other dialect and Middle English literature was written in the many dialects that correspond to the region, history, culture, and background of individual writers.

In this period religious literature continued to enjoy popularity and *Hagiographies* were written, adapted and translated, for example, *The Life of Saint Audrey* and the *South English Legendary*. At the end of the 12<sup>th</sup>-c, *Layamon's Brut* adapted *Wace* to make the first English-language work to discuss the legends of Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. It was also the first historiography written in English since the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. In this century a new form of English now known as *Middle English* evolved. The Middle English literature of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries is much more diversified than the previous Old English literature. A variety of French and even Italian elements influenced Middle English literature especially in southern England. In addition, different regional styles were maintained, for literature and learning had not yet been centralized. For these reasons, as well as because of the vigorous and uneven growth of national life, the Middle English period contains a wealth of literary monuments not easily classified.

### **Women's literature :**

While it is true that women in the medieval period were never accorded full equality with men (although some sects, such as the *Cathars*, afforded women greater status and rights), some women were able to use their skill with the written word to gain renown. Religious writing was the easiest avenue - women who would later be canonized as saints frequently published their reflections, revelations, and prayers.

Much of what is known about women in the Middle Ages is known from the works of *nuns* such as *Clare of Assisi*, *Bridget of Sweden*, and *Catherine of Siena*.

### **Chaucer :**

One of the best-known names in English literature is Geoffrey Chaucer. He saw himself as the first great poet of the nation and the language, and he remains the reference point which other writers have used through the centuries.

Chaucer was influenced by many kinds of writing, and used many European models.

Chaucer was a European in his views and experience, but his ambition was to make the literature of English the equal of any European writing. The *Canterbury Tales* is Chaucer's best known work, and the first major work in English literature.

Chaucer lived in an eventful age.

When he was in his twenties, the English language was established, for the first time, as the language of the law-courts. When he was in his late thirties, Richard II ascended the throne, to be deposed and murdered a year before Chaucer's death by Bolingbroke, the rebel who became Henry IV. He died in (1400), about 40 years before the invention of printing. The next work of Chaucer is *Troilus and Criseyde*, a love story taken from the annals of the Trojan War, a war which has provided many European writers with innumerable myths. Shakespeare also told the bitter tale of these two wartime lovers. He had planned for 120 stories, but only twenty- four of them were written. However, the *Canterbury Tales* is still the great mirror of its times, and a great collection of comic views of the life it describes. Again and again the stories and the story-tellers contrast old ways of behaving and of thinking with more modern attitudes. So, religious is less important than enjoying life, and making money is a new ambition:

But al be that he was a philosopher,  
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre;  
But although he was a philosopher,  
Nevertheless he had only a little gold in his coffer.

### **John Skelton :**

The only considerable poet that England seems to have produced in the 15<sup>th</sup> -c, is John Skelton (1460-1529). He is considered as the final figure in the late medieval period. He is a very individual poet who wrote short rapid lines of poetry about subjects like drinking alcohol, a pet bird, the death of a sparrow; he produced a powerful monologue of Christ on the cross. Skelton's humour, as well as his poetic style are unique. He and his poetry are difficult to describe, and not many critics have written about him in literary history.

## **Lecture-2**

### **The Renaissance (1485-1649) :**

Renaissance means rebirth. From about (1500 – 1600) the world was reborn in many ways. The Renaissance began in Italy, especially in art and architecture, in the 15<sup>th</sup>-c. As England became the most powerful nation in Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup>-c, new worlds were discovered and new ways of seeing and thinking developed. Columbus was thought to be the first European to discover America in (1492); Copernicus and Galileo later made important discoveries about the stars and planets; Ferdinand Magellan sailed all over the world. The renaissance was worldwide. A golden age of English literature commenced in (1485) and lasted until (1660). Malory's *Le morte d' Auther* was among the first works to be printed by William Caxton, who introduced the printing press to England in( 1476). From that time on, readership was vastly multiplied. The growth of the middle class, the continuing development of trade, the centralization of power and of much intellectual life in the court of the Tudor and Stuart monarchs and the widening horizons of exploration gave a fundamental new impetus and direction to literature.



The new literature nevertheless didn't fully flourish until the last 20 years of the (1500s), during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.

The English part in European movement known as humanism also belongs to this time.

**Humanism** encouraged greater care in the study of the literature of classical antiquity and reformed education in such a way as to make literary expression of paramount importance for the cultured person.

According to Ronald Carter and John Mc Rae, the Renaissance was the beginning of the modern world in the areas of geography, science, politics, religion, society and art. London became not only the capital city of England, but also the main city of the known world. The invention of printing meant that all kinds of writing were open to anyone who could read.

Many new forms of writing were developed, but the most important form of expression was the theatre. This was the age of Shakespeare and the Golden Age of English drama.

### **Renaissance Poetry :**

The poetry of the earlier part of the 16<sup>th</sup>-c is generally less important, with the exception of the work of John Skelton, which exhibits a curious combination of medieval and Renaissance influences. The two greatest innovators of the new, rich style of Renaissance poetry in the last quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup>-c were Sir Philip Sidney and Edmund Spenser.

Sidney, universally recognized as the model Renaissance nobleman, inaugurated the vogue of the sonnet cycle in his *Astrophel and Stella* (written 1582, published 1591). In this work, in the elaborate and highly metaphorical style of the earlier Italian sonnet, he celebrated his idealized love for Penelope Devereux, the daughter of Walter Devereux.

This idealization of the beloved remained a favored motif in much of the poetry and drama of the late 16<sup>th</sup>-c; it had its roots not only in Platonism but also in Platonic speculations of humanism and in the chivalric idealization of love in medieval romance.

### **Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593) :**

He was an English playwright and poet, considered the first English dramatist and the most important Elizabethan dramatist before William Shakespeare, although his entire activity as a playwright lasted only six years. Earlier playwrights had concentrated on comedy; Marlowe worked on tragedy and advanced it considerably as a dramatic medium.

The Golden Age of English Drama produced a great many plays and playwrights. Marlowe and Ben Jonson are the two whose names are most closely connected with Shakespeare. Marlow was one of the University Wits, the young generation of writers who were educated at the university of Oxford and Cambridge. Shakespeare was almost the only great writer of this period who didn't have a university education. Marlowe's plays are quite different in style and content from Shakespeare's. They are tragedies with superhuman heroes who stretch the limits of human life in several ways. The language of Marlowe is more classically based than Shakespeare's: where Shakespeare's characters speak the same language as their audience, Marlowe's characters use a more poetic style, which was influenced by his university studies of Latin and Greek dramatic poetry . Marlowe's reputation as a dramatist rests on five plays: *Tamburlaine*, *Doctor Faustus*, *The Jew of Malta*, *Edward II*, and *Dido, Queen of Carthage* . In the eyes of Anthony Burgess, these five plays represent the most important characteristics of the Renaissance. Marlowe's best known hero, Doctor Faustus, has sold his soul to the devil in exchange for all knowledge and power. The play, Doctor Faustus is a series of scenes showing Faustus's ambition, but at the end he

has no more time and when the devil returns to claim the soul he has bought, Faustus in his final moments tries to keep death a way:

O soul, be changed into little water-drops;  
And fall into the ocean, **ne'er** be found  
Ugly hell, **gape** no! come not, Lucifer!  
I'll burn my books!

**ne'er**: never, **gape**: open the mouth wide.

Marlowe stretches drama further than before in subject matter and dramatic performance.

### **William Shakespeare (1564- 1616) :**

Elizabethan tragedy and comedy alike reached their true flowering in Shakespeare's works. His comedies, of which perhaps the best are *As You Like It* (1600) and *Twelfth Night* (1602), depict the endearing as well as the ridiculous sides of human nature. His great tragedies- *Hamlet* (1600), *Othello* (1604), *King Lear* (1605), *Macbeth* (1606) and *Antony and Cleopatra* (1607), look deeply into the springs of action in the human soul. His earlier dark tragedies were imitated in style and feeling by the tragedian John Webster in *The White Devil* (1612) and *The Duchess of Malfi*. In Shakespeare's last plays, including *The Tempest*, he sets a mood of quiet acceptance and ultimate reconciliation that was a fitting close for his literary career. These plays, by virtue of their mysterious, exotic atmosphere and their quick, surprising alternations of bad and good fortune, come close also to the tone of the drama of the succeeding age. There is no doubt that the famous line in all English literature is probably from *Hamlet* (1600): "**to be, or not to be, that is the question**". That one quotation expresses many of the issues and problems which Shakespeare put into his plays. Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark, is deciding whether to go on living, or to die. He has to face the fact that his father, the king, has been murdered by his own brother, Claudius, who is now the king; and Gertrude, Hamlet's mother has married this new king. Hamlet's duty is to avenge his father's death. However, to kill a king is one of the great moral problems- if the king is next to God, how can it be right to kill him? Hamlet asks such questions of duty, honour and revenge in his role as prince. And as a man he also faces questions of love (with Ophelia), friendship, study and of family. Hamlet has become the best known of all Shakespeare's plays. The main character faces a familiar series of problems: they are not simply the problems of a prince, but many of them are questions which every individual in the modern world will face at some time or another, as they learn to live in the world. The final problem Hamlet has to face is his own death and, in the new, non-Catholic world, religion cannot offer the help it used to in the medieval world. Of Shakespeare's thirty- seven plays, many of the best known are tragedies.

Each is, however, different from all the others. Shakespeare in his long writing career, from his first plays, *Henry VI* and the *Comedy of Errors* in about (1590), to his last, *The Tempest* and *Henry VIII* in (1611) and (1613), was constantly experimenting with different styles, techniques and themes.

Many of Shakespeare's plays are history plays. These usually have as their title the name of an English king, such as *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *Henry VI*, and *Henry VIII*. They study what is to be a king. Shakespeare examines every king as a human being first, and they are very human, strong or weak, clever or not so clever, good or bad. Some of these history plays are



more than historical stories, and become tragedies, like *Hamlet*, *Richard II* and *Richard III* are examples of Shakespeare developing the range of his plays in this way.

Shakespeare manages to create sympathy for his heroes, making them understandable, complex, recognizable characters.

In a similar way, Shakespeare describes the classical history of Ancient Rome in the Roman plays, which also combine the historical with the tragic: *Titus Andronicus*, *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus* make up this group of plays. Like the history plays, they were all written at different times in Shakespeare's career.

He liked to return to different historical periods at different times, and it is interesting to see that the historical subjects return in his early period, his middle period and his late plays.

Shakespeare's plays were written to be performed, he didn't intend them to be published. All the plays are divided into five sections called acts and smaller sections called scenes. But this only happened about a century after the publication of the *First Folio* (first edition) of his complete plays in (1623). Shakespeare wrote his plays for performance, so it was more important that the audience follow the progress of the plays on the stage than see the act and scene division on the page.

### **The Tragedies :**

Most of Shakespeare's great tragedies were written in the years between (1598) and (1607), sometimes called his "black" period.

Little is known about Shakespeare's own life, but it is known that he had a son, called Hamnet, who died at the age of ten in (1596). This may influence Shakespeare's black period, when many of plays concern fathers and children.

Romeo and Juliet, the most famous tragedy of love in all literature, was one of Shakespeare's earliest tragedies, and it is less complex and philosophical than most of the later tragedies. As we have seen, some of the history plays and Roman plays are also tragedies. The major tragedies are *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth*. They are tragedies of revenge, jealousy, family and ambition, but of course, as we have seen with *Hamlet*, they touch on many other subjects, too.

They have in common the fact that mankind is constantly trying to go beyond its limits in order to achieve perfection and harmony in the world. But mankind itself is not perfect, and so must fail in these attempts. At the end of *Macbeth*, Macbeth, who has killed the king in order to become king himself, realizes that all his murders have been useless:

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow

Creeps in this petty **pace** from day to day

To the last syllable of recorded time...

It is a tale

Told by an **idiot**, full of sound and fury,

**Signifying** nothing

**Pace**: slowly like this , **idiot**: fool , **signifying**: meaning .

Many of the tragedies have pessimistic endings, where life has lost its meanings. But usually there is some hope for the future - a new king in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* for instance. Of all the tragedies, *King Lear* is the most pessimistic.

As an old man, King Lear gives his land and power to two of his daughters, Goneril and Ragan, but they treat him badly. His third daughter, Cordelia, who really loves him, is,

however, misunderstood by her father. There is no real hope for the future at the end of the play, as Lear's words show.

His daughter Cordelia lies dead in his arms:

No, no, no life

Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life

And **thou** no breath at all? **Thou' It** come no more,

Never, never, never, never, never!

**Thou:** you , **Thou' It:** you will .

Only in his last plays, after the tragedy which shows a hatred for mankind, *Timons of Athens*, did Shakespeare begin to find hope again. And this hope is usually expressed in the younger generation, who represent the future of the world.

### **The comedies :**

The question of the future harmony of the universe is also important in Shakespeare's comedies. In the tragedies the harmony is lost, and as Othello says, " Chaos is come again", a tragedy always ends with the death of the hero. In the comedies, the world is threatened and shaken but a comedy always ends happily. But the subjects of the comedies are just as serious as some of the subjects of the tragedies: identity in *The Comedy of Errors*, *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*; the role of women in *The Taming of Shrew*, a love and jealous in *Much Ado About Nothing*, love and power in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, the power of the money and the attempt to deceive in the *Merchant of Venice*.

### **Shakespeare's Sonnets :**

Shakespeare's Sonnets, sequence of 154 sonnets by English poet and playwright William Shakespeare. Thought to be written between (1595) and (1599), the sonnets are of the English, or Shakespearean form, which consists of three quatrains and a couplet, with the rhyme scheme *abab cdcd efef gg*.

These sonnets are considered one of the supreme achievements in this form in all of English literature. Shakespeare's sonnets were first collected in book form by the printer Thomas Thorpe, who registered them on May 20, (1609), with the title Shakespeare's Sonnets. The sonnets cover a wide range of subjects. In the eyes of Anthony Burgess, this poet is the subject of innumerable books, written in all the languages of the world. The scanty details of his life have been examined under countless microscopes; the world has judged him and found him the greatest playwright, perhaps the greatest writer of all time.

Shakespeare was an actor himself, as well as a playwright and the director of his company, the King's Men, and he often uses this kind of theatrical metaphor.

Indeed, it is one of the most image of the age. The nature of the human life was a new theme in literature, and shows the Renaissance concern with how to understand life and death in the modern world. Religion no longer gave the answer as it had done in earlier periods of literature.

The literature itself questions and discusses and looks for answers. The questions he asked are still relevant, the characters he invented still living in the imagination of audiences and readers four hundred years after they were first created.

### **Ben Jonson (1574- 1637)**

Ben Jonson was influenced by classical writers, but his tragedies were not so successful as his comedies and later masque entertainment. Many of Ben Jonson's early plays caused

controversy because of their political relevance, and he was put in jail more than once. Jonson later wrote two of the best known comedies in English, *Volpone* (1606) and *The Alchemist* [medieval chemist] (1610). Most of Jonson's best known works come from the period after the death of Queen Elizabeth in (1603) , during the reign of James VI of Scotland who became king James I of England. The plays written during his reign are called Jacobean. Where Marlowe was Wholly an Elizabethan, Jonson's best work is mostly Jacobean. We feel from Jonson's writings about Shakespeare that he did not fully appreciate, or even like, the works of his senior. Shakespeare followed no rules and had no dramatic theory; Jonson was a classicist, whose masters were the ancients. Jonson's plays obey the rules of "unity" : the action takes less than a day and the scene never moves from the initial setting- Venice in *Volpone*, a London house in *The Alchemist*. Moreover, Jonson had a dramatic theory already out-of-date in his own day

### Lecture-3

#### **Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama – Other Major figures:**

There were many other playwrights who were part of the Golden Age of English Drama, and many of their plays are still successfully performed.

#### **Thomas Kyd :**

Thomas Kyd wrote *The Spanish Tragedy* in (1592), and if he had written no more he would be remembered for this play. It was one of the most popular plays of its time and gave rise to a whole series of revenge tragedies, the greatest of which was Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The 'tragedy of blood' , influenced particularly by the Latin writer of poetic tragedies, Seneca, took many forms during Elizabeth's reign.

They were called tragedies of blood because they usually ended in the violent death of most of the main characters.

The first was *Gorboduc* by **Thomas Sackville** and **Thomas Norton** in (1561), and the greatest *Hamlet* in (1600). The form remained popular for many years, reaching its final expression in the tragedy of sexual love between brother and sister, ' *Tis Pity She's a Whore*' by **John Ford** which was published in (1633), during the reign of James I's son, King Charles I. The reason for the popularity of these plays is that they were full of action and violence, passion, emotion and often madness. Revenge was such a major theme because it was part of the 'code of honor' of the age, and was particularly important where the family was involved. Most of these plays, like *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Hamlet* involve a family: the father avenging his son's death in the first and the son avenging the death of his father in the latter.

The plays of the Jacobean become even more complex, even more passionate and violent than the plays of the Elizabethan age, as they go more deeply into problems of corruption and human weakness. The masterpieces of Jacobean tragedy include the plays of **John Webster**, especially *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi* , written about the same time. These plays contain two of the most memorable tragic heroines in English drama, Vittoria Corombona and the Duchess of Malfi herself, women who are the victims of male violence and whose sufferings show many of the problems that Jacobean society was experiencing.

#### **Thomas Middleton :**

The plays of Thomas Middleton include both comedy and tragedy. His comedies are of a new kind which are called city comedies. They are set in London and are filled with local characters, tradesmen and families, all mixed into very funny social comedy.

*A Mad World, My Masters* and *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, both dating from about 1605-6, are among the best of these. Middleton's tragedies are, like Webster's, dark, violent and complex. They explore themes of madness, politics and revenge, going beyond Shakespeare's tragedies in their pessimistic view of life. The world they show is a world without settled values, a world without certainties, a world where all power is corrupt and all humanity weak. *The Revenger's Tragedy*, *The Changeling*, *Women Beware Women* and the allegorical *A Game at Chess* are the classical Jacobean tragedies for which Middleton is known. In the (1620s), the taste for violence, corruption and complex sexual feelings began to cause reaction from extreme Protestants, the Puritans. The Golden Age of Elizabeth was long past, and new social, religious and political problems were facing the nation. The Puritans saw the theatre as a symbol of the bad features of the past, rather than as a major literary form. This was the beginning of a time of criticism of the theatre and its morals which eventually led to the closure of the theatres by the puritans in (1642). The theatre was never again so popular as a medium of entertainment, nor so effective in questioning and analyzing the issues and concerns of an age.

The Golden age of English Drama ended in criticism, censorship and decline, very far from the achievements of Shakespeare and the other major dramatists of the time.

### **Poetry, from Renaissance to Metaphysical :**

After the popular, very English poetry of Skelton at the beginning of the sixteenth century, there was a great change. English poetry was read much more by the upper classes, and the native rhythms of Skelton gave way to formal , courtly verse, influenced by the Italian Renaissance.

### **Philip Sidney :**

The first major poet of the Renaissance was Sir Philip Sidney.

In many ways he was the ideal Renaissance figure: the perfect man; a soldier, a man of learning and romantic lover. These are the three qualities which a dramatic hero like Hamlet has to have if he is to be perfect. Sir Philip Sidney died at the age of only thirty- two, after the battle of Zutphen.

He was an English poet, courtier and soldier, and is remembered as one of the most prominent figures of the Elizabethan age. His works include *Astrophel and Stella*, *The Defence of Poesy* (also known as *The Defence of Poetry* or *An Apology for Poetry*), and *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*. His death, like the death of so many young poets, helped to create the romantic image of Sidney.

His *Astrophel and Stella* is full of idealized love for Stella- but the poet can never have her, so love and loss are linked together.

These lines contain much of Sidney's Renaissance philosophy:

Leave me, O love, which **reache**st but to dust;  
And **thou**, my mind, **aspire to** higher things;  
Grow rich in that which never **taketh** rust;  
Whatever fades, but fading pleasure brings

**Reachest:** reaches, **thou:** you, **aspire to:** aim for, **taketh:** takes .

### **Edmund Spenser (1552-99) :**

He was an English poet, best known for *The Faerie Queene*, an epic poem and fantastical allegory celebrating the Tudor Dynasty and Elizabeth I. He is recognized as one of the premier craftsmen of Modern English verse in its infancy, and is considered one of the greatest poets in the English language. He was known as the Prince of Poets in the Elizabethan age. He has always been a controversial figure, sometimes described as a great poet with new ideas, sometimes as only a writer who tried to flatter his superiors. He certainly wanted to take his place in the tradition of English poetry, following on from Chaucer. *The Faerie Queene*, published in (1590), is his great national epic to celebrate Queen Elizabeth.

He used a new verse form, now called the Spenserian stanza, of nine lines rhyming ababbcbcc, the last longer than the first eight. It is the most important poem in English since the time of Chaucer almost exactly two hundred years before, and celebrates Queen Elizabeth as Gloriana, the national heroine who brings peace and wealth to the nations.

" Sweet Thames! run softly ,till I end my song ". from the wedding poem *Prothalamion* is one of Spenser's best- known lines.

Spenser loved the English language – unlike men such as Bacon, who had no real confidence in it – and tried to do for it what Homer did for Greek and Virgil for Latin. He wanted to write books which would speak of the glories of the Elizabethans as *Virgil 's Aeneid* spoke about the glories of the Rome of Augustus.

His major work is *The Faerie Queene*. It is a monumental poem that speaks of human virtues – love, faith, friendship, and so on – in the form of allegory.

### **Spenserian stanza and sonnet :**

Spenser used a distinctive verse form, called the Spenserian stanza, in several works, including *The Faerie Queene*. The stanza's main meter is iambic pentameter with a final line in iambic hexameter (having six feet or stresses, known as an Alexandrine), and the rhyme scheme is ababbcbcc. He also used his own rhyme scheme for the sonnet.

Most of the playwrights of the Elizabethan and Jacobean age wrote poetry as well as plays. The poetry of Christopher Marlowe and Ben Johnson , for example, is among the greatest of the time. Poetry was, however, mostly a private form.

Many of the poets of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries didn't publish their works, but showed them only to a small circle of friends and admirers. So, the poets who are now regarded as the most important of the Jacobean age were not very well known as poets on their lifetimes.

### **John Donne- George Herbert :**

John Done was a noted satirist who wrote poems both religious and romantic. Donne, who is considered the head **metaphysical poet** (a highly intellectual, imagery-rich style of writing), is also known for his elaborate use of the metaphor, and his work often featured great irony and wit.

John Donne was one of the most famous churchmen of his time, and wrote poems from the (1590s), but his poems were not published until (1633), two years after his death.

George Herbert, also a churchman, was less of public figure than Donne. Most of his poems were first published also in (1633), shortly after his death at the age of thirty-nine.



Donne and Herbert were known as metaphysical poets. The critic, Samuel Johnson, in the eighteenth century gave them this name, but he didn't admire them because he found their poems too complex and difficult. But in the twentieth century, the poet and the critic T.S. Eliot showed how important these poems were.

The metaphysical poets often wrote about religious themes, discussing their personal relations with God, often speaking directly to him.

Donne and Herbert were university educated men, and interested in all scientific and geographical exploration in the world around them. So their poetry is full of very modern ideas, original imagery, and the kind of inner conflict which we find in the soliloquies of Shakespeare's troubled heroes. The metaphysical poets were not afraid to use their poetry to face the intellectual, emotional and spiritual problems of the age. They experimented with language and verse forms, with great originality.

Herbert wrote one of his poems "Easter Wings" in the shape of a wing.

### **Henry Vaughan :**

Henry Vaughan was a friend and follower of Herbert. He was Welsh and his poetry is often about the Welsh countryside. Vaughan is a poet of innocence, where Donne and Herbert are poets who describe experience.

In the 1603s and 1604s the political problems of the nation grew, and the Puritans became more powerful. The Cavalier poets were a group who supported the king, Charles I against the Puritans (the Roundheads). Their poems are simpler and more lyrical than the poetry of the metaphysical. They can be concerned with love, and the passing of time, as in Robert Herrick's line:

Gather **ye rosebuds** while ye may.

( **Counsel** to Girls')

**Ye:** you , **rosebuds:** roses, **Counsel:** advice .

### **Elizabethan and Jacobean Prose :**

Prose in Renaissance may seem less important than drama and poetry. But, in fact, Renaissance prose is important in several ways: it helped to form the modern English language, and it gives the earliest examples of many forms of writing which later became very popular. Many forms of prose writing reached a wide audience through the new invention of printing.

Travel writing, essays, guidebooks and political pamphlets all appeared.

While Shakespeare's plays took spoken English to a wide new audience, another great *influence* on the English language was the *Authorized Version* of the Bible. The outstanding prose works of the Renaissance are not so numerous as those of later ages, but the great translation of the Bible, called the King James Bible, or Authorized Version, published in (1611), is significant because it was the culmination of two centuries of effort to produce the best English translation of the original texts, and also because its vocabulary, imagery, and rhythms have influenced writers of English in all lands ever since. The new king, James I, asked a group of translators to prepare the *Authorized Version* of the Bible. There had been many translations of the Bible into English (usually from Latin to Greek) since the first examples in the 1380s but the *Authorized Version* became the one standard version for use in all the churches in the nation. This meant that

almost everyone, even if they couldn't read, heard the Bible in church on Sundays. The result was that the language of the *Authorized Version* became part of everyone's experience, indeed a major part of British culture.

Travel writing became popular as people wanted to read about the voyages of explorers to the new worlds of the Americas and the East. The Italian traveler, Marco Polo, who had travelled as far as China in the late (1200s), and had written some rather fantastic stories about his travels, also became popular when his romance about his travels was translated into English. Imaginary voyage also appeared. They could bring together the flavor of the real voyage and some fantasy- as Marco Polo probably did, to make his travels more exciting. The major figure in imaginative prose writing in the late 16<sup>th</sup>-c was Thomas Nashe. He is sometimes called the inventor of modern narrative.

### **Thomas Nashe :**

Thomas Nashe is an English novelist, satirist, and dramatist. He was considered a great wit and brilliant personality of his time. Nashe was employed by the Church of England to answer the attacks made on it by a Puritan writer, or group of writers, known as Martin Mar prelate. Nashe's best-known work, the novel *The Unfortunate Traveller, or The Life of Jack Wilton* (1594), greatly influenced English literature. It is the earliest example of picaresque fiction in English, predating the realistic adventure novels of Daniel Defoe and Tobias Smollett.

Religious writing also became popular. The sermons of a churchman like John Donne were often published – in fact, they were better known in his own lifetime than poems for which he is now famous.

It was Donne who wrote, in *Devotions*[religious writings]: ' No man is an island , entire of itself; every man is a piece of continent, a part of the main.' [ main: sea]. Illustrated books, called emblem books, also became popular in the Renaissance. They usually contained pictures with verses to explain the symbolism of the pictures, on many subjects as nature, history and morality, later some of these books also used prose writing to accompany the pictures. All these forms of prose- fiction, essays, guidebooks, travel books, and academic writing- were also well developed. They show the first great use of publishing to spread ideas, to cause discussion and to challenge the minds of readers. They are the beginning of a long tradition of the cultural importance of the printed word.

## **Lecture- 4**

### **The Commonwealth and Restoration ( 1649- 1713) :**

After the death of Shakespeare, great changes took place in English life and thought. With the removal of the threat of Catholic Spain -one of whose missions had been to re-impose Catholicism on Protestant England- a certain division began to show itself strongly: England began to split into two camps. This division had, under Queen Elizabeth I, not seemed very dangerous, but under Charles I it grew and led to **Civil War**. Briefly speaking, we may say that the division was between the old way of life and the new. The split in the country was a threefold one- economic, political, and religious.

In fact, there were for the most part **Puritans**: they wanted a purer kind of Christianity than the Reformation had brought to the country. They wanted a Christianity so pure that it would admit of no toleration, no joy, and no color. They wanted an austere religion. The

Puritans followed **John Calvin of Geneva**, who taught that free will did not exist and that men were predestined from the beginning of life to go to either heaven or hell.

This period extends from (1660), the year Charles II was restored to the throne, until about (1789). The prevailing characteristic of the literature of the Renaissance had been its reliance on poetic inspiration or what today might be called imagination. The inspired conceptions of Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Milton, the true originality of Spenser, and the daring poetic style of Donne all support this generalization.

In the (1640s) the puritans (Roundheads) and the king's followers (Cavaliers) went to war against each other. The victory of the Roundheads led to the execution of King Charles I. After this, Oliver Cromwell became the leader of the Commonwealth, the **Lord Protector**. When he died in (1658), his son was named Lord Protector, but he was less successful than his father, and in (1660) Parliament invited Charles I's son to return to England from France. He was made king as Charles II.

Although the monarchy was restored, most of the power was held by Parliament; two parties the Whigs and the Tories, and a prime minister governed the country. On the death of Charles II in (1685), his brother King James II became king, but after he became a Catholic his reign ended with the **Glorious or Bloodless Revolution of (1688)**, and no Catholic monarch has reigned since then. The new king and queen were Mary, the sister of Charles and James, and her husband, William of Orange from Holland.

The main concern of that time was to avoid another revolution. The spirit of the Restoration was one of reason: society did not want to see again the kind of problems of the first half of the century. The new middle classes had more and more influence as their wealth grew and they wanted stability above all. This was also the time of great commercial growth, and of scientific advances. The **Royal Society** was begun in (1662-3) 'for the improving of Natural Knowledge'. In (1694), another important institution, the **Bank of England**, was begun.

The main philosophical text behind the thinking of the second half of the century was *Leviathan* by **Thomas Hobbes**, written in exile in France in (1651). Hobbes's theory of society is presented in the medieval form of an allegory: the leviathan, a huge animal, is the commonwealth, and the individual man is totally controlled by the state.

### **Poetry, Politics and John Milton :**

The period between the execution of King Charles I in (1649) and the Restoration of the monarchy with his son King Charles II in (1660) is called the Commonwealth. Oliver Cromwell, leader of the Roundheads, was named Lord Protector of the nation. One of the main texts of the Commonwealth is the poem by **Andrew Marvell** (1628-78), '*An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland*' (1650), which has been called 'the greatest political poem in English'. It celebrates Cromwell as the hero of the nation:

So restless Cromwell could not **cease**

In the **inglorious** Arts of Peace.

**Cease:** stop, **inglorious:** not bringing good results.

The theme of the poem is strength, and strong government. These were to become the major concerns of the nation during and after Cromwell's rule. Marvell became the unofficial Poet Laureate to Cromwell and wrote several of his major poems during the Commonwealth. The new society of the Restoration gave much more importance to the search for new values, or the exploration of new worlds, as in the Renaissance.

## John Milton :

The major figure who links the Renaissance and the restoration, John Milton, can be seen as both a Renaissance and a post-Renaissance man. He is very good in verse as well as in prose. He saw all of the greatest struggles of the century. In his early career, he gave himself a role as a poet in the classical sense, influenced by Latin writers and traditions but with the clear ambition to make himself one of the great poets in English, in the line of Chaucer. His writing was also deeply Christian, as in " *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*" [nativity= birth]. Both classical and Christian influences run through all his work, particularly in *Lycidas*, which is an elegy about the early death of his close friend Edward King. Its last lines are optimistic which was unusual in the (1630s):

Tomorrow to fresh **woods**, and **pastures** new.

**Woods**: small forest ,**pastures**: fields.

It is Milton who is the hero of his epic poem and his tragedy. Milton's father was a composer of music and Milton was blessed with a musical ear. After a lifetime of overworking already weak sight, he went blind, his famous work was written after this calamity struck him. He also played the organ. He wrote in Latin and Italian as well.

But in the next twenty or so years Milton wrote little poetry. Instead he concentrated on writing prose pamphlets on many of the most controversial subjects of the time: he wrote about divorce, politics, education, freedom of the press and religion, and became **Latin Secretary** to Oliver Cromwell in the early years of the Commonwealth.

After the Restoration, he went into hiding and was later arrested. When he went blind, he wrote *Paradise Lost*, which was published in 12 books, in (1667).

*Paradise lost* is the major epic poem in English. It is a religious epic. Milton had thought about using of King Arthur for his great epic poem, but finally decided to use the more general myth of the Creation, with the figures of God and Satan [the devil], Adam and Eve, and the Fall of Mankind as his subject.

This poem, in fact, caused controversy because it can be read as a religious text, supporting the Christian ideals, or it can be read as the last great Renaissance text, stressing the freedom of choice of Adam and Eve as they choose the path of human knowledge and leave the Garden of Eden, Paradise. At the end of the poem, they follow the path towards the unknown future of all humanity:

The world was all before them, where to choose

Their place of rest, and **Providence** their guide:

They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,

Through Eden took their **solitary** way.

**Providence**: God's care, **solitary**: lonely .

## John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester :

The poetry of this man is set against this religious kind of writing.

His life became a kind of symbol of the Restoration: he was a rake, a man who gave his life to pleasure, especially alcohol. His poetry is often very witty and rude, celebrating the pleasures of life and satirizing all of society, from King Charles II to mankind itself in " *A Satire against Mankind*":

I'd be a god, a monkey or a **bear**,

Or anything but that **vain** animal,

Who is so proud of being rational.

**Bear:** large, fierce animal, **vain:** having too good an opinion of oneself.

In some ways Rochester is the last of the metaphysical lyric poets, writing complex emotional poems about love and life, but in other ways he is the first of the new Augustan age.

The Augustans took their name from the classical Latin age of Augustus, who died in AD 14. They saw this period as the high point of Roman culture. They wanted their own period to be similarly important to English literature. Reason and the rational basis of thought were very important to them: emotions should not take the upper hand over thought and reason. Satire became an important kind of poetry: it looks wittily at the manners and behavior of society. The long satirical poem *Hudibras* by **Samuel Butler** was one of the first of such poems. It is a mock-romance, one of the first major English texts to be inspired by the Spanish text *Don Quixote*, and its satirical comments are aimed at religious, academic and political subjects of the age.

**John Dryden (1631- 1700) :**

John Dryden was an influential English poet, literary critic, translator, and playwright who dominated the literary life of Restoration England to such a point that the period came to be known in literary circles as the Age of Dryden.

He established the heroic couplet as a standard form of English poetry by writing successful satires, religious pieces, fables, epigrams, compliments, prologues, and plays with it.

John Dryden was a master of satire in poetry after the Restoration. He was a poet, playwright and essayist, and was at the center of most of the important discussions and controversies of his time. One early poem, *Heroic Stanzas*, praised Cromwell on his death (1685), so when the new Catholic king, James II, was forced to leave in (1688), he was on the wrong side of the religious controversy, and lost his post as Poet Laureate at the court of the king.

Dryden's satirical poems of the early (1680s), in particular *Absalom and Achitophel* and *The Medal* focus on the religious and political issues of the time and show a different kind of satire from Rochester's. Rochester comments in general on all mankind but Dryden satirizes particular people and situations. Here, he shows something of the political atmosphere of the age in his *Absalom and Achitophel*:

Plots, true or false, are necessary things,

To raise up commonwealths and ruin kings.

Dryden produced many works and was one of the first to make his career as a professional author. His essays on the nature of drama, such as ' *Of Dramatic Poesy*' were the first of their kind in English. His translations from Latin and Greek greatly improved the Augustan age's knowledge of the classics which inspired them. He remains the major literary figure of the late seventeenth century, a writer of wit and intellect, who was producing poetry until the very end of his life. His final work, *The Secular Masque* (1700), provides a famous quotation to end an age:

**Thy** wars brought nothing **about**;

Thy lovers were all untrue

'**Tis** well an old age is out,

And time to begin a new.

**Thy:** you, **about:** achieve nothing, **Tis:** it is.



Being an intellectual age, the Restoration period was most interested in theory- especially in literary theory. Dryden comes first. He gives us, in essays, prologues and epilogues, his considered opinions on the literary art. These opinions of his can be regarded as the first forms of literary criticism which forms an important part of the literary heritage of any nation.

### **Restoration Drama Comedy :**

Dryden wrote more than twenty plays, from comedy to tragedy, and was especially successful in the new genre of tragicomedy, of which the best-known example is *Marriage-a-la- Mode* [ fashionable marriage]. His most famous tragedy is *All for Love* (1678) which returns to the characters of Antony and Cleopatra, the subject of a tragedy by Shakespeare earlier in the century.

After the Restoration, drama and the theatre were quite different from what they had been during the Renaissance. There were now only two public licensed theatres: the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane and the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre, which moved to Covent Garden in (1732). The audience was at first upper class or upper-middle class. The plays of the time reflect the manners and morals of the men and women who had returned with the king from France - so Restoration comedy is often called the Comedy of Manners. Dryden wrote several such comedies, but the most famous comedies were written by George Etherege, William Wycherley and William Congreve.

The main subject of these plays was love, but there were new concerns, developed from the earlier city comedy: older men or women looking for younger lovers, upper class manners contrasting with middle-class values, and country life contrasting with city life.

George Etherege's *The Comical Revenge* (1664) was one of the first such comedies, and his two later comedies, *She would if She Cou'd* and *The man of Mode*, are among the most typical and successful of the genre. He satirizes the false fashions and selfish behavior of the time in plots which become very complex and which remain very funny on stage.

William Congreve was the major dramatist of the (1690s). He wrote only four comedies and one tragedy, but with these he proved to be one of the most famous dramatists in English. *The Way of the World* (1700), his final play, takes the comedy to its highest level of achievement.

After Congreve stopped writing, at the highest point of his success, the main writers of comedy were George Farquhar and Susannah Centlivre.

Aphra Behn wrote 18 plays, such as *The Rover* [the wanderer] in which the main character may have been based on Rochester. One of her main themes was the result of arranged and unsuitable marriages. This kind of social problem and the false values involved is also found in Susannah Centlivre's plays, the best known of which is *A Bold Stroke for a Wife*.

### **Tragedy and Serious Drama :**

Both Dryden and his rival Shadwell wrote new versions of the plays of Shakespeare. The new middle-class audiences could not accept much of Shakespeare's violence and the tragic endings to some of his plays. So *King Lear*, for example, was severely rewritten to give it a happy ending, and Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* was rewritten in (1690s) as a farce. The main tragic form of the Restoration was heroic tragedy. The best examples are the plays of Thomas Otway, another writer who died young, at the age of thirty-three.

*Venice Preserv'd* (1682) shows the difference between this kind of tragedy and the Jacobean

tragedy, where death and disaster could destroy the whole of society. At this time there were many theories about realism, how to show reality on stage, but pressure was growing to limit what the theatre could say: it was not only a danger to public morals, but it also became too controversial politically. John Gay's *The Beggars Opera* was one of the most popular works to satirize politicians and the false values of society. In (1737) the Stage Licensing Act was introduced to prevent playwrights making fun of politicians – of course religion and morals were part of the problem. Henry Fielding's *The Historical Register for the Year (1736)* is a political comedy which annoyed the prime minister, Robert Walpole to the extent that he decided to censor all plays. Only in the (1770s), with the plays of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, does the comedy reach the level of the Restoration again. His plays, such as *The Rivals*, *The critic* and *The School for scandal* were very successful. One of Sheridan's most famous characters is Mrs. Malaprop in *The Rivals*, who keeps using words incorrectly. For example, she says someone is 'as headstrong as an allegory on the banks of the Nile' when she means alligator (the reptile). The word malapropism has entered the English language.

## Lecture 5

### Augustan to Gothic (1713 – 89) :

The death of queen Anne Stuart (youngest child of James II) brought the German House of Hanover to the British Throne: George I, George II and George III.

The term, 'Augustan' refers to King George I's desire to be compared to the first Roman Emperor, Augustus Caesar, when poetry and the arts were supported and admired, and thus flourished. The power of parliament and the prime minister continued to grow.

This was the time of the of the **Industrial Revolution** and the **Agricultural Revolution**. New inventions made manufacturing processes quicker, and British trade with the rest of the world grew enormously. The growing British Empire was a ready market for British produce. At the same time, new processes in agriculture forced many people to move from the country to the new cities to find work. It was also a time when many people, especially from Scotland and Ireland, went to live in the new colonies in America. Towards the end of the century a new mood of freedom began to grow: the **American Declaration of Independence** in (1776) was the first sign of this, and later the French Revolution in (1789) brought the spirit of 'Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity' to Europe. This was a great threat to the stability of British society, which did not want to see the revolution of (1649) repeated.

In literature the classical ideas of the Augustans changed. Later in the century the focus on the rational mind and on an ordered society changed to focus on the world of nature and natural feelings. Drama became less important, especially after the Stage Licensing Act of (1737), but the novel became more and more important, reaching a huge number of readers as the profession of writing became more important. Journalism and magazines formed and reflected the opinions of the new middle classes which gave the nation its strength and its political power.

### Key authors of the Augustan era :

The most representative authors of this era are:

- Alexander Pope
- Jonathan Swift

The era also saw the development of the novel by authors such as:

- Daniel Defoe, whose *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) was published in more editions than any other works besides Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*
- Samuel Richardson, who wrote the sentimental epistolary novels *Pamela* and *Clarissa*
- Henry Fielding, who imitated Richardson in his *Shamela*, and wrote *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*.

### **The Rise of the Novel :**

The rise of the novel is said to begin from the early (1700s), but there are many earlier examples of fictional writing. To go back a century, there are the works of Thomas Nashe; after the Restoration of (1660) the figure of Aphra Behn is also important in the development of the novel. In fact, women have always written a lot of fiction, and in the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century they were also the greatest part of readership, the market for the new professional writers.

**Aphra Behn** wrote about thirty novels, including *Love Letters between a Nobleman and his Sister* (1683), a novel in the form of letters, also called an epistolary novel. This became a very popular form about sixty years later, when the epistolary novel was at the top of the fashion. Aphra Behn's most famous novel is *Oroonoko*, sometimes called the first philosophical novel in English. She was not afraid of controversy and seemed to enjoy her role as a speaker for women's rights and sexual freedom.

**Mary de la Riviere Manley** was a similarly 'scandalous' woman, and although her novels were hugely popular in her own lifetime, they were completely ignored by the (mostly male) critics who followed. She brought the kind of political satire found in Dryden's poems of (1680s) into the novel. She used false names for real characters to tell scandalous stories about political and personal enemies.

Mrs. Manley was traditional and royalist in her politics, but very liberal in her views on the role of women in society. So her novels show the struggle between the sexes: an innocent girl ruined by an older man is frequently a part of these stories. Her novels are collections of stories rather than well-structured plots. *The new Atalantis* was also political and handled many objectionable themes such as rape and incest. When these themes were handled by men they were not considered quite so objectionable.

**Daniel Defoe, Jonathan Swift, Samuel Richardson** and **Henry fielding** are the most important male names in the story of the rise of the novel.

**Daniel Defoe** was an English writer, journalist, and spy, who gained enduring fame for his novel *Robinson Crusoe*. Defoe is notable for being one of the earliest practitioners of the novel. In some texts he is even referred to as one of the founders, if not the founder, of the English novel. He wrote more than five hundred books, pamphlets, and journals on various topics (including politics, crime, religion, marriage, psychology and the supernatural). He was also a pioneer of economic journalism.

Defoe produced many works and was a journalist for many years before publishing *Robison Crusoe* in (1719). It was an immediate success, and has remained one of the most famous stories in the world. In it, Robison Crusoe makes a kingdom of his island after his ship is wrecked, and remains there for over 28 years, building a society of two men, with only his "Man Friday" as his companion. The story can be read as a fable of survival in praise of the human spirit, or as an example of how the new society brought its values, religion and

selfish behavior to any place it colonized. Friday is considered inferior, his religion laughed at. Meanwhile, Robinson grows rich, and when he returns to society he has become a model of the new capitalist man of Europe. Property and the white man's power are more important than such things as love or marriage. Defoe's technique in most of his novels is to use a first-person narrator, an 'I' who tells the story as if it had really happened. Most of the novelists of the eighteenth century described the bad side of life, but with a happy ending to show that it was all worthwhile.

**Jonathan Swift** was a satirist, essayist, political pamphleteer and poet, famous for works like *A Journal to Stella*, *The Battle of the Books*, and *A Tale of a Tub*. Swift is probably the foremost prose satirist in the English language, and is less well known for his poetry. He is also known for being a master of two styles of satire; the Horatian and Juvenalian styles. His early satire "*The Battle of the Books*" is one of the best descriptions of the difference between the Ancients (the classical writer) and the Moderns in the literary tastes of the Augustan period.

**Henry Fielding** was first a playwright then turned to journalism and became editor of *The Champion*. Then, he stopped writing for the theatre in (1737), and turned to the novel including: *Joseph Andrews*, *Abraham Adams* and *Jonathan Wild*.

**Samuel Richardson** was a major English 18<sup>th</sup>-c writer. He had been an established printer and publisher for most of his life when he wrote his first novel and immediately became one of the most popular and admired writers of his time. Richardson examined female ideas and circumstances, but Fielding examined male points of view.

### **The Novel after 1750 :**

After Richardson and Fielding the novel had become a rich and varied genre. In the next fifty years it moved in several quite different new directions. Again there were several women writers who led the way.

**Charlotte Lennox**, who was a British author and poet of the 18<sup>th</sup>- c. She is most famous now as the author of *The Female Quixote* and for her association with Samuel Johnson and Samuel Richardson, but she had a long career and wrote poetry, prose, and drama. She concentrates on female experience from a female point of view, as her titles imply.

**Sarah Fielding** called her most famous novel *David Simple* which is the name of the innocent hero, who is looking for a 'real friend'. He is disappointed, and the novel is one of the earliest realistic works which avoids the traditional happy ending. Here the man rather than the woman is the victim. The most unusual novel of the time was *Tristram Shandy* by Laurence Sterne. This is a long comic story which plays with time, plot and character, and even with the shape and design of the page.

**Laurence Sterne** was the first to change the order of the traditional plot. He wanted to show how foolish it is to force everything into the traditional plot. He was also the first writer to use what came to be known as the Stream of Consciousness technique, following the thoughts of characters as they come into their heads.

**Tobias Smollett** was the major comic novelist of the second half of the eighteenth century. His novels such as *Roderick Random* (1748) and *Peregrine Pickle* (1751) are entertaining adventures, in which the heroes go traveling all over Europe. They are angry young men, who react against the bad treatment and the ills of society with strong language and often violent behavior.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century the novel took a new direction.

**Horace Walpole's** *The Castle of Otranto* started the fashion for the Gothic, and the horror novel was born. The story is set in medieval times, with castles and ghosts, appearances and disappearances, and a whole range of frightening effects, which are still popular in story and film. The Gothic novel went beyond realism and moral instruction. It explored the extremes of feeling and imagination.

### **Augustan Poetry :**

When Dryden died in (1700), poetic satire was at its highest point, but no major poet followed him immediately. Dryden's successor, Alexander Pope, arrived on the scene.

**Alexander Pope** is generally regarded as the greatest English poet of the eighteenth century, best known for his satirical verse and for his translation of Homer. He is the third most frequently quoted writer in the English language, after Shakespeare and Tennyson. Pope was a master of the heroic couplet. His famous poem, which is entitled *The Rape of the Lock*, is a mock-heroic satire about a family quarrel over a bit of Belinda's hair which was cut off by a friend. It is quite different from Dryden's satire: Pope's world is much smaller, the issues exaggerated as if they were of major importance. Pope's *Dunciad* is, like Dryden's *MacFlecknoe*, an attack on the dullness of his literary rivals. Much of Pope's writing is about other writers or figures from the upper-class society of the time. His *Essay on Criticism* (1711) and *Essay on Man* (1733-4) contain a great deal of philosophical observation expressed wittily and wisely. Pope is the master of ironic observation, often angry in his tone. As a poet he made great use of the heroic couplet, and his many works have made the English language richer with a number of famous lines, such as these from an *Essay on Criticism* :

A little learning is a dangerous thing.

Think deep, or taste not the Pierian **spring**.

**Spring:** the power of imagination.

**Lady Mary Wortley Montagu** is the best known of many women poets of the time. She was a friend, and later an enemy of Pope. She was well known for her letters, from Turkey and Europe, but her poetry is famous, too.

Another woman poet, **Mary Leapor**, died at the age of only twenty four, but left some remarkable poems which were influenced by Pope, and were published after her death with Richardson's encouragement. Here is a man making a proposal to a woman, in a distinctly unromantic way:

Now, madam, as the chat goes round,

I hear you have ten thousand pound:

But that as I a **trifle** hold,

Give me your person, **dem** your gold;

**Trifle:** small thing ,**dem:** curse.

This is irony like Pope's, pointing to their society's concern with money. It also explores the ideas of women's role in society. The female poets, like Mary Leapor or Hetty Wright, are usually critical of male superiority in society- perhaps this is why male critics have ignored them. As **Hetty Wright** said to her husband, writing about an unhappy marriage:

I will not **brook contempt** from **thee**!

**Brook** tolerate ,**contempt:** lack of respect ,**thee:** you.



The most important single poem of the eighteenth century was **Thomas Gray's** *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard*. It celebrates the lives and deeds of the poor, ordinary people buried in the churchyard in the small village of Stoke Poges, talking of 'the short and simple annals of the poor' [annals= stories].

Gray's poem is a realistic pastoral poem in simple four-line verses, far from the social and intellectual world of the Augustans.' Let not ambition mock their useful toil' [toil= work] he asks, and in doing this he shows a return to simpler values, which is the beginning of the Romantic movement's return (at the end of the century) to nature and to more natural language. His poem became one of the most popular and well known of all English poems, and made Gray famous – but he refused the offer to become Poet Laureate, following the theme of his poem even in his own life:

Far from the **madding** crowd's ignoble **strife**,  
Their **sober** wishes never learned to **stray**;  
Along the cool **sequestered vale** of life  
They kept the noiseless **tenor** of their way.

**Madding**: rushing in a crazy way, **strife**: unpleasant argument, **sober**: modest, **Sequestered**: hidden, peaceful **vale**: valley, **tenor**: pattern.

Several poets followed Gray's return to village life and the values of the countryside which were being lost as the Industrial Revolution and the Agricultural Revolution forced many people to move from the country to the city.

**Oliver Goldsmith's** poem *The Deserted Village* (1770) speaks of the loss of a village for the same reasons;

**William Cowper's** *The Task* celebrates the working life of the countryside, and **George Crabbe's** narrative poems, *The Village* (1783) and *The Borough* (1810), tell stories of the harder side of this kind of life. They stress the values of country life without making it seem simple or easy.

The *Odes* of **William Collins** had a great influence on later poets. They were sad and lyrical. This tone of sadness is also found in a major woman poet about forty years later: **Charlotte Smith's** *Elegiac Sonnets* which combine the note of sadness with a celebration of nature, and the Romantic poets Coleridge and Wordsworth admired them greatly.

**Fanny Burney** also known as Frances Burney. She was a novelist, diarist and playwright. In total, she wrote four novels, eight plays, one biography and twenty volumes of journals and letters. Her first novel *Evelina* (1778) brought her immediate success, and she continued to write novels about young women in society for many years. She lived to be almost ninety years old, and her letters and diaries describe English (and French) society over a major period of historical change.

Some of these writers and their works are described as pre-Romantic [pre= before]. But this is only because they have been seen as coming before the Romantic poets at the end of the century: in fact their writing deserves its own in history because it reacts against the rationalism and order of the Augustans and rediscovers the simple life and its values.

**Robert Burns** was the greatest Scottish poet and many of his poems are written in Scots, a variety of English used in Scotland. His themes are nature and the humanity of nature. For example, in *To a Mouse* (1786), he shares the problems of the mouse whose home is lost when the farm worker destroys it by accident. The lines about this have become famous:

The best-laid schemes  
Of mice and men  
**Gang aft agley.**

**Laid:** most carefully considered, **gang aft agley:** often go wrong.

Burns himself was a farm worker, and later a tax collector. He uses his own experience with humor and sympathy in poems describing the life of the country people such as *The Cotter's Saturday Night* [cotter's= farm worker's]. Many of Burns's songs are still well known, and he was one of the poets most admired by the Romantic poets.

The Scottish writer **James McPherson** caused a great controversy with his books of verse, *Fingal* in (1762) and *Temora* in (1763). He had written these himself, but said they were old poems written by Ossian.

### **Journalism and Criticism :**

With the growth of the new middle classes, there was an increasing demand for the printed word, and writing became a profession. Authors were now professional, full-time writers, not only of books or plays. Many famous newspapers and magazines were started at this time, and most of the writers of the time were also journalists. Daniel Defoe, for example, worked for business magazines before he started writing his novels. Other writers became more famous for their journalism than for their books or plays.

The journalism of the early eighteenth century books took the opinions and fashions of the capital city, London, to the whole nation this was an important change in ways of thinking, especially outside the capital.

The most famous of the early magazines were *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* (observer). The first was begun by Richard Steele and the second by Steele with Joseph Addison. The magazines were important in expressing ideas and a point of view, setting standards of taste and judgment, and influencing the values of the society they wrote for and about.

Essays of criticism were also becoming popular. Dryden had written several important critical pieces, and magazines often caused a lot of controversy when literary or political arguments were printed in their pages. Many writers and editors had to pay fines or were even sent to prison for expressing their opinions too strongly. Defoe himself was sent to prison for writing a pamphlet entitled 'The Shortest Way with the Dissenters'. [dissenters= protesters].

The major critic of the eighteenth century was Samuel Johnson. He started writing for magazines in (1737), and wrote a tragedy *Irene* and the novel *Rasselas* to help pay his debts. But he made his name with the publication of his *Dictionary of the English Language*. After the success of the dictionary he wrote a preface to Shakespeare. This was one of the first critical essays on Shakespeare, and the beginning of a major tradition.

### **Letters and diaries :**

Other kinds of writing which began to grow in importance in the 18<sup>th</sup> -c include diaries and letters. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters in the first part of the century were famous. Later, Lord Chesterfield's *letters* to his son became very popular as a book of good manners.

The Romantic Period lasts about forty years from the French Revolution in (1789) to the Reform Act of (1832). It is sometimes called the Age of Revolution: the American Revolution of (1776), and the spirit of ' Liberty, Equality and Fraternity' of the French Revolution made it a time of hope and change.

Romanticism was arguably the largest artistic movement of the late (1700s). Its influence was felt across continents and through every artistic discipline into the mid-nineteenth century, and many of its values and beliefs can still be seen in contemporary poetry.

The poetry of the Romantics, from Wordsworth and Coleridge's Lyrical Ballads (1798), is in many ways poetry of war. Society was changing, becoming industrial rather than agriculture as towns and cities developed.

The government encouraged free trade; the new middle class became powerful, and there were moves towards voting reform and greater democracy. But change was slow, and there was a lot of suffering, especially among the poor: they had to move from the country to the city; there were many political problems, the worst example of which was the Peterloo massacre of (1819), when government soldiers attacked a large group of protestors, killing eleven people and injuring about four hundred. War abroad was followed by war between social classes at home. In literature, Romantic writing is mostly poetry: Wordsworth and Coleridge wanted a revolution too, in poetic language and in themes which contrasted with the earlier Augustan age.

#### **Blake:**

William Blake had a very individual view of the world, and his poetic style and ideas contrast with the order and control of the Augustan world. His best-known collection of poetry *Songs of Innocence and Experience* was published in (1794). His poems are simple but symbolic- the lamb is the symbol of innocence, the tiger the symbol of mystery:

Little lamb, who made **thee**?  
Dost thou know who **made thee**?  
(*The Lamb*)

**Thee:** you ,**Made thee:** do you.

Tyger! Tyger! Burning bright  
In the forests of the night,  
What **immortal** hand or eye  
Could **frame thy** fearful **symmetry**?  
( *The Tyger*)

**Immortal:** godlike, **frame:** arrange, invent, **symmetry:** frightening balance or perfection.

Blake's poetry was not well known by the general public, but he was mentioned in *A Biographical Dictionary of the Living Authors of Great Britain and Ireland*, published in (1816).

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who had been lent a copy of *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, considered Blake a "man of Genius". Blake's later poems are complex symbolic texts, but his voice in the early (1790s) is the conscience of the Romantic age. He shows a contrast between a world of nature and childhood innocence and a world of social control.

Blake saw the dangers of an industrial society in which individuals were lost, and in his famous poem *London* he calls the systems of society 'mind-forged manacles'. For Blake,

London is a city in which the mind of everyone is in chains and all individuals are imprisoned.

Even the River Thames has been given a royal charter [ chartered = given rights ] so that it can be used for business and trade:

I wander **thro'** each charter'd street  
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow,  
And **mark** in every face I meet  
Marks of weakness, marks of **woe**.  
In every cry of every Man,  
In every **Infant's** cry of fear,  
In every voice, in every **ban**  
The mind-forg'd **manacles** I hear.

(London)

**Thro:** through, **mark:** notice, **woe:** sadness, **infant:** very small child,

**Ban:** law to stop something, **manacles:** chains around the hands, which are made by the brain .

### **Wordsworth :**

William Wordsworth's poetry looks inward rather than outward. Wordsworth's most famous work, *The Prelude* (1850), is considered by many to be the crowning achievement of English romanticism. In *The Prelude*, his long autobiographical poem, we read how an individual's thoughts and feelings are formed. Wordsworth is the main character in most of his poems . He wants 'to see the heart of things. He wrote *The Prelude* for many years. It is a psychological poem in which the individual searches for personal understanding, in a manner which has become a main theme of modern literature.

When Wordsworth wrote that the 'child is father of the Man' he means that adults can learn from children. However, the Augustans believed that children should be controlled as soon as possible.

Augustan writers believed that an ordered society was important, whereas Romantic writers believed that the life of the individual spirit was important. These different ideas resulted in different styles of writing and different uses of language. For example, Augustan poets often use a special poetic language and a special poetic pattern of heroic couplets.

### **Coleridge :**

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a leader of the British Romantic movement, was born in England. His father married twice and had fourteen children. The youngest child in the family, Coleridge was a student at his father's school and an avid reader.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge worked closely with William Wordsworth. They were both responsible for *Lyrical Ballads* and for the influential Prefaces to the second edition (1800), but they were very different poets. Wordsworth's poetry is more about the day-to-day ordinary people; Coleridge's poetry is more about the extraordinary and supernatural world. There are only four poems by Coleridge in *Lyrical Ballads*, but one of them is his best-known, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* [rhyme of the old sailor]. In the poem an old mariner tells of how he shot an albatross. When his ship can no longer sail, and he has terrible dreams, he understands that he must suffer for what he has done. He learns from his suffering that he cannot drink until his soul is refreshed:

Day after day, day after day  
We **stuck**, nor breath nor motion;  
As idle as a painted ship  
Upon a painted ocean.  
Water, water, everywhere  
And all the boards did shrink;  
Water, water, everywhere,  
Nor any drop to drink.

**Stuck:** did not move.

The Wedding Guest, who listens to the story, learns he must love all creatures and becomes a 'sadder and a wiser man'. The journey symbolizes a Christian journey from innocence to experience:

He **prayeth** well, who **loveth** well  
Both man and bird and **beast**.  
He prayeth best, who loveth best  
All things both great and small.

**Prayeth:** prays , **loveth:** loves, **beast:** animal.

Coleridge wrote another two famous poems entitled *Christabel* and *Kubla Khan*.

*Christabel* is a poem about a journey which is not completed, but in which there is a search for fuller meaning and understanding. *Kubla Khan* is a poem about the creative imagination which is, for Coleridge, the most powerful of all the human senses. The poem is not complete and has a subtitle: "A Fragment".

Both Wordsworth and Coleridge believed that poetry should be a 'language really used by men', and in some poems they write in a style which, at the end of the eighteenth century, was new and different and which influenced many poets who followed them. In (1817), he published *Biographia Literaria*, which contained his finest literary criticism.

**Keats :**

Wordsworth and Coleridge are the first generation of Romantic poets. Most of the second generation were not even born at the time of French Revolution, but their poetic concerns are shared with Wordsworth and Coleridge.

John Keats was born in (1795), three years before *Lyrical Ballads* was published, but Keats also wrote about the nature of literature, the imagination of poetry.

His *letters* are important critical works. Many of his poems are incomplete fragments, but they make a lasting pattern, and by the time of his death, at the young age of twenty-five, Keats was one of the most important Romantic poets.

Although his best-known poetry was written almost twenty years after the publication of *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth and Coleridge were important influences on his poetry and his ideas. The fragment "Hyperion" was considered by Keats's contemporaries to be his greatest achievement

Like Coleridge, Keats was interested in the irrational, mysterious and supernatural world of the distant past. The main themes of the poems are the search for lasting beauty and happiness and for permanent meanings in a world where everything fades and dies.

In these lines from 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' Keats, speaking directly to the urn, describes how the artist has created a permanent object of art in which the figures continue to live:



When old age shall this generation waste  
Thou **shalt** remain, in the midst of other **woe**  
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou **sayest**,  
'Beauty is truth, truth beauty – that is all  
**Ye** know on earth, and all ye need to know.

**Shalt:** you shall, **woe:** with other sorrow, **sayest:** you say, **ye:** you.

The death of Keats at the age of 25 made him a symbol for the Romantic movement: of contrast between life and death, between completeness and incompleteness, and between permanence and impermanence.

### **Shelley :**

Percy Bysshe Shelley felt the death of Keats particularly deeply, and wrote about it in his poem *Adonais* (1821). Shelley's poetry is similar to that of Keats in some ways; they both wanted to capture deep personal experiences. But Shelley's writing is, like Blake's, more political. In the poem *Queen Mab* he attacks the religion and morals of the age. In an Essay entitled 'The Necessity of Atheism ' (1811) he states that we cannot prove that God exists. In the long poem *The Mask of Anarchy* (1832) he writes about the future revolution of the working classes as he responds to the Peterloo massacre of (1819), when government soldiers attacked a group of workers in Manchester who were meeting to ask for social and political reforms. Shelley wanted greater freedom, and in his best-known lyric poem *Ode to the West Wind* (1819) he makes the wind a symbol of the power of change as the wind blows away the old life and spreads the seeds which will create a new life of greater freedom for all.

Other short lyric poems such as *The Widow Bird* communicate deep feelings through descriptions of the world of nature:

A widow bird sat **mourning** for her love  
Upon a wintry **bough**;  
The frozen wind crept on above,  
The freezing stream below.  
There was no leaf upon the forest bare,  
No flower upon the ground,  
And little motion in the air  
Except the **mill** wheel's sound.

**Mourning:** feeling sad about death, **bough:** branch, **mill:** place where corn is made into flour.

Like other Romantic poets, Shelley wrote about poetry. He wrote in particular about the poet as a hero who can show the way to a better society. In his essay *The Defence of Poetry*, he states that poetry can reform the world. In the same essay, he writes: ' The rich have become richer, and the poor have become poorer.' This is one of the clearest statements of the division which happened in the English society during the Romantic period. The other famous quotation from Shelley's *Defence* is that 'Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.' These lines mean that poets are able to write the laws of the world by which we live our lives and that in this role they are unacknowledged, that is, no one recognizes that they do this. In fact, idealism and social observation go together in Shelley.

### **Byron :**

Lord Byron was one of the most influential and, for many, is one of the most typical Romantic poet. He was a great influence across Europe in the nineteenth century. His picture of the romantic hero, an isolated individual who attacks social conventions and challenges the authorities of the age and who searches for, but never finds, peace and happiness, was particularly influential. His hero Childe Harold, in the long poem *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, made Byron famous, the first popular best-selling poet, in (1812), when he was twenty four. Manfred, in Byron's poem *Manfred* (1817), and Childe Harold are both heroes with passionate feelings who rebel against society, who want to experience what is forbidden, and who seem to be beyond good and evil.

In *Don Juan*, Byron is more satirical. He invites his readers to be involved in the poem, to laugh with him at his hero, and to question their own values and the values of their society.

These lines from *Don Juan* illustrate Byron's use of irony:

He pored **upon** the leaves, and on the flowers,  
And heard a voice in all the winds; and then  
He thought of wood-**nymphs** and immortal **bowers**  
And when he looked upon his watch again  
He found how much old Time has been a winner  
He also found that he had lost his dinner.

**Upon:** studied closely, **nymph:** minor female gods, **bowers:** hiding places for the gods.

The sudden changes in style and context (from immortal nature to losing his dinner) are common in Byron's poetry. Here the style helps Byron comically to show that the love of nature can have its problems. His fame, however, was among the aristocratic intellectual class, at a time when only cultivated people read and discussed literature. At 24, Byron was invited to the homes of the most prestigious families and received hundreds of fan letters, many of them asking for the remaining cantos of his great poem—which eventually appeared in (1818).

### **Other Romantic Writers :**

#### **John Clare**

Nature is a major concern of poets from Robert Burns, through all the Romantics and on to **John Clare**. Clare is the least known of all the Romantics, and in many ways the most unusual. He watched and described the decline of the agricultural countryside, and himself suffered a mental decline, ending his life in a mental hospital. His descriptions of nature are also descriptions of an individual personality who is anxious and uncertain:

The crows sit on the **willow** tree  
The lake is full below  
But still the dullest thing I see  
Is self that wanders slow.

(*Song*)

**Willow:** a tree which is often said to be weeping.

The Romantics were poets of change. They found constants in nature and in art, but they could also see the new dangers of the modern world, and in many of their writings the security of the individual is threatened. The Romantic period was a time in which prose writing developed rapidly. Writers such as **Thomas de Quincey**, **Charles Lamb** and **William Hazlitt** changed the styles and topics of the eighteenth-century essay and also created new

forms in which their personal impressions and the subjects of everyday life were central. **Thomas Love Peacock**, whose work was written in both the Romantic and Victorian periods, satirizes some of the main Romantic ideas and lifestyles in novels such as *Nightmare Abbey* [nightmare= frightening dream] in which the main characters are based on Coleridge, Byron and Shelley).

The most important novelists of the time were **Jane Austen** and **Walter Scott**. At this time a number of novelists were women; the most famous of them was **Fanny Burney** who wrote novels such as *Evelina* and *Camilla*. These two novels discuss the young women's experiences of the society of their day. **Maria Edgeworth**, an Irish novelist, wrote about the details of every provincial life, and both **Anne Radcliffe** and **Clara Reeve** wrote Gothic novels which were popular for their exciting plots. A later Gothic novel, *Frankenstein* by **Mary Shelley**, the wife of Percy Bysshe Shelley, shows an extraordinary world in which a living being is made by a Genevan student from the bones of the dead, but becomes a monster which nobody can control. The monster murders Frankenstein's brother and his wife and finally Frankenstein himself. The novel shows the interest of the Romantics in the supernatural and in the attempts of man to be as powerful as God. *Frankenstein* can be seen as one of the first modern science fiction novels.

### **Jane Austen**

Jane Austen is different from other writers of her time because her main interest is in the moral, social and psychological behavior of her characters. She writes mainly about heroines as they grow up and search for personal happiness. Jane Austen's pictures are detailed, often ironic, and always about a small number of people. She does not write about the Napoleonic Wars or the social and political issues and crises of her age, but her observations of people apply to human nature in general.

### **Sir Walter Scott**

Scott was a poet, novelist, ballad-collector, critic and man of letters, but is probably most renowned as the founder of the genre of the historical novel, involving tales of gallantry, romance and chivalry. Beginning with the publication of *Waverley* in (1814), one of the most significant books of the nineteenth-century, his anonymously published *Waverley* novels proved hugely popular in Europe and America, and established his reputation as a major international literary force. Scott writes about revolution, history and social change, and about characters from all levels of society. Most of his novels from *Waverley* to *The Bride of Lammermoor* are set in the past, but comment on the present because they show characters who try to understand the changes in their world. Sir Walter Scott was a very popular author and an influential writer across Europe. He was one of the first international best-selling authors. Although the Romantic period is best known for the work of the major Romantic poets, the period also saw the rapid growth of the novel. In a period of rapid social and political change the novel became more and more important as a detailed record and exploration of change. The growth of the novel in this period prepared the way for the even larger growth of the novel in the Victorian period.

### Lecture-7

### **The Victorian Period (1832- 1900) :**

Queen Victoria reigned from (1837) until (1901), but the Victorian Age is sometimes said to begin with the defeat of Napoleon in (1815). In literature the period starts with the death of Sir Walter Scott in (1832), and sometimes goes up to (1914).

When Victoria became queen the monarchy was not very popular. There were many social problems: members of the working class were severely punished when they wanted to join together in trade unions; the Corn Laws kept the price of bread high; the Chartist movement wanted votes for all and social reforms.

During Victoria's reign the population grew from 2 million to 6.5 million and the cities grew bigger. Britain became the richest manufacturing country in the world.

The Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace in London in (1851) became the high point of this worldwide success; the colonies were a huge market for Britain's products.

But in the (1850s) several events began to end this success. The Crimean War (1854- 6), Britain's first war for forty years, was not a success and it was the first war for to be reported daily in the newspaper.

In India, the Indian Mutiny of (1857) showed that all was not well in the colonies.

In (1859), the beliefs of the age were questioned in the book of Charles Darwin *The Origin of Species*. The book showed that man was descended from apes.

Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert, died in (1861), and the queen was a widow for 40 years. The prime minister for most of the second half of the century was either William Gladstone or Benjamin Disraeli. There were many protests against the monarchy, and a strong republican movement grew in the (1870s). Disraeli challenged this by building up the image of the queen and she became Empress of India.

As the problems of Victorian society increased, she became more and more a symbol of Britain, just as Queen Elizabeth was in the late sixteenth century. The moves towards democracy, giving the vote to all men over twenty-one, continued after the first Reform Act of (1832) with another act in (1867), but the slow process was not completed until women got the vote in (1928).

The Victorian age was an age of extremes: the working classes were poor, and lived and worked in terrible circumstances; the middle classes grew rich and comfortable. There were double standards in this society. Many writers used their works to show that although on the surface this was a successful society, below the surface there were many problems.

### **Victorian Novels :**

In the Romantic period, poetry was the most important literary form. In the Victorian Period, the novel became the most popular and important form; in Britain and all over the world. This was partly because of the success of the novels of Sir Walter Scott. His great series of *Waverley* Novels, published between (1814) and (1832), became best-sellers all over the world. They created a fashion for the series novel, published in monthly parts. This fashion went on for most of the rest of the century.

When the novels were later published in novel form, usually in three volumes, sometimes called triple- decker novels, readers borrowed them from libraries. Private commercial libraries became a very important influence on the reading public.

They sometimes refused to lend a book, especially later in the century , because they didn't like the subjects matter. However, in the early years of the century the novels didn't cause

offence. They were often historical, in the tradition of Scott. Then, with the novels of Charles Dickens, a social concern with the problems of the society of the time enters the novel.

In England, **Charles Dickens, William Thackeray, Charlotte and Emily Brontë, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy** and a host of other Victorian novelists vaulted fiction into a position of ascendancy over poetry as the dominant literary genre by the end of the nineteenth century.

Part of the novel's rise came from its being a vehicle of important social criticism. Novelists not only reflected their contemporary world in the more realistic mode of fiction, they brought attention to important social and political issues and influenced major reform and advancement.

### **Charles Dickens :**

Dickens wrote thirteen novels between *Sketches by Boz* (1836) and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, published in the year of his death (1870). His first great success was *The Pickwick Papers* (1836-7). The sufferings of children were a main theme of Dickens's writing. He wanted education for all children, and shows his readers the kind of problems children had in the cities, where poor people had no chance to share in the success of the nation. Dickens's novels often tell the stories of victims, and he made his readers aware of many of the problems of Victorian society.

Dickens went on to write novels which criticized society in a more general way. *David Copperfield* is his most positive novel about growing up. This novel was based in part on Dickens's own childhood and his success. *Hard Times* is the novel by Dickens which most clearly shows how the poor lived. Dickens is also known for his historical novels like *A Tale of Two Cities*, about the French Revolution. Dickens edited several very successful magazines, and published many of his novels and stories in them. He also performed scenes from his novels all over the world, turning the novel into a kind of theatre. His career is in many ways a mirror of the Victorian change from feeling optimistic, at the beginning of the queen's reign in (1837), to uncertainty and sadness thirty years later. Dickens was a famous writer when he was alive and he is now one of the best-known and most widely read of English writers. People know his name as they know the name of Shakespeare. Like Shakespeare, the names of his characters have entered the English language.

### **Elizabeth Gaskell :**

One of the most important authors encouraged by Dickens was Elizabeth Gaskell. She lived in Manchester, and had close knowledge of the lives of the working people there. Her novels are possibly the closest to the reality of the time: *Mary Barton* (1848) and *North and South* (1855) are particularly clear in their social concerns. Mrs Gaskell was also the biographer of Charlotte Brontë, one of the three sisters who all write novels.

### **Charlotte Brontë :**

Charlotte Brontë was a British novelist, the eldest out of the three famous Brontë sisters, Emily and Anne whose novels have become standards of English literature. Charlotte, Emily, and Anne published a joint collection of poetry under the assumed names of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell. Although the book failed to attract interest (only two copies were sold), the sisters decided to continue writing for publication and began work on their first novels. *Jane Eyre* (1874) by Charlotte Brontë was immediately successful, and it is still one of the most famous novels about a woman. Jane starts as a poor child with no parents and goes through



many sufferings until she meets Mr Rochester, who has locked his wife in a room because she is mad. The novel examines many sides of the circumstances of women, and Jane's words at the end, 'Reader, I married him' show a new move towards freedom and equality. Jane controls her own life and, through all her difficulties and problems, becomes more independent.

### **Emily Brontë:**

Emily Jane Brontë was a British novelist and poet, now best remembered for her only novel *Wuthering Heights*, a classic of English literature. Emily was the second eldest of the three surviving Brontë sisters, being younger than Charlotte Brontë and older than Anne Brontë. She published under the masculine pen name Ellis Bell. *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë is quite different- it is a novel of passion, an early psychological novel. The central characters, Cathy and Heathcliff, live out their passion in the windy, rough countryside and the landscape is as wild as their relationship the novel is very original in the way it is written, moving backward and forward in time, and in and out of the minds of the characters. Again it presents a new view of women and their emotions.

### **Anne Brontë:**

Anne Brontë was a British novelist and poet, the youngest member of the Brontë literary family. Anne's two novels, written in a sharp and ironic style, are completely different from the romanticism followed by her sisters, Emily Brontë and Charlotte Brontë. She wrote in a realistic, rather than a romantic style. Anne, wrote *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* [tenant= occupier] also with an unusual central female character and involving complex relationships and problems.

All three Brontë sisters faced these kinds of problems in the novel with unusual courage and directness, and together they changed the way female characters were more realistic, less idealized, and their struggles became the subject of a great many novels later in the nineteenth century.

### **George Eliot :**

Mary Ann (Marian) Evans, better known by her pen name George Eliot, was an English novelist. She was one of the leading writers of the Victorian era. Her novels, largely set in provincial England, are well known for their realism and psychological perspicacity. She used a male pen name, she said, to ensure that her works were taken seriously. Her books give a remarkable pictures of Victorian social and domestic life. She was born Mary Ann Evans, and worked as a translator for many years before her companion, George Henry Lewes, encouraged her to write fiction. George Eliot was already writing about controversial women's themes, such as having drunk husband and being an unmarried mother.

In her later novels she writes about the whole of society, especially in *Middlemarch* (1871-2), which many people consider to be the greatest novel in the English language.

George Eliot's writing included poems and essays, as well as her novels. Her philosophy of life is sometimes called Positivism, as she saw humanity as continuing to move forward, although progress was always very slow. In her positive views, Eliot went against some of pessimistic moods which came into English writing in the later part of the Victorian age.

### **William Thackeray :**

Like Dickens William Thackeray wrote for magazines, and was known as a comic writer, before he began writing his more serious novels. *Vanity Fair* (1847-8) is one of the best-

known novels of its time. It is a historical novel, but also a comedy, describing the society of upper-class London with great irony and wit. It questions many of the values of Victorian society, and this is something Thackeray continued to do in several other novels.

### **Thomas Hardy :**

Thomas Hardy was an English author of the naturalist movement, although in several poems he displays elements of the previous romantic and enlightenment periods of literature. He is the novelist who best reflects the problems of the last years of the nineteenth century. Many of his novels caused offence, and they were even burned in public, and not bought by the private libraries. The tone of Hardy's novels is tragic. His novels show a part of the movement of the century: from the light comic tone of early Dickens, through the sadness and anger of his later novels; through the social concerns of Gaskell, Eliot and Trollope; to the tragic vision of Hardy's own writings. Most of Hardy's writing is set in the fictional area of Wessex, in the south-west of England. He shows the older truths of the country and the conflict between the traditional and the modern in the move from country to city. His characters are often victims of destiny, who can't save themselves from their tragic end. Hardy's major novels include: *The Return of the Native* (1878), *the Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886) and *Jude the Obscure* (1895). Hardy's novels are all concerned with characters who try to go beyond their own limits.

### **Lecture- 8**

### **Victorian poetry :**

The last of the Romantic poets was also one of the first – William Wordsworth, who lived on until (1850). By the time he died, a new tone had entered English poetry. The major figures in Victorian poetry had made their reputations some time before the death of the last Romantic Poet.

### **Tennyson :**

Alfred Tennyson is one of the most well-loved Victorian poets. Tennyson, the fourth of twelve children, showed an early talent for writing. At the age of twelve he wrote a 6,000-line epic poem. He and his brother Charles published *Poems by Two Brothers*. Although the poems in the book were mostly juvenilia, they attracted the attention of the "Apostles," an undergraduate literary club led by Arthur Hallam.

Hallam and Tennyson became the best of friends; they toured Europe together in (1830) and again in (1832). Hallam's sudden death in (1833) greatly affected the young poet.

The long elegy *In Memoriam* and many of Tennyson's other poems are tributes to Hallam.

Tennyson began his career in (1830), with the publication of *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*.

It is interesting that the title uses the word lyrical, which was also used by Wordsworth and Coleridge in their *Lyrical Ballads* of (1798). But, despite this close connection, the tone of Tennyson's poetry was quite different from poetry of the Romantics. For Tennyson nature is not simply the object of beauty:

Nature red in tooth and **claw**

**Claw:** sharp nail on the foot of an animal

Tennyson is best for *In Memoriam A.H.H.*, an elegy to a friend, Arthur Hallam, who died young. Its tone of regret and loss reached a very wide audience in the second half of the century. When queen Victoria became a widow on the death of her husband, Albert, in (1861) *In Memoriam* became her favourite text, and Tennyson became the nation's

favourite poet. He is usually considered to be a poet of sadness and loss, but his poetry shows a wide range of subject matter and not all his poems have a tone of unhappiness. In the (1830s) he wrote a lot in the dramatic monologue form.

This form uses a speaking voice which shows his or her thoughts, and a full idea of the characters comes out from the words.

Tennyson's *Poems* in two volumes was a tremendous critical and popular success.

In (1850), with the publication of *In Memoriam*, Tennyson became one of Britain's most popular poets. He was selected Poet Laureate in succession to Wordsworth. Tennyson became the national poet and when something historic, like the Crimean War, happened it was Tennyson who wrote about it, in for example "The Charge of the Light Bridge" [bridge= a group of soldiers]. This became famous for its praise of the heroes, as well as its acceptance of the role of the soldiers who died:

Theirs not to reason why  
Theirs but to do or die

In his later years, Tennyson's poetry continued its lyrical sadness, and he wrote many poems on the legends of King Arthur and the Knights of Round Table, known as *The Idylls of the King* [idylls= poems]. He had begun working on these poems in the (1830s), and return to the subject in the (1850s), going on to publish several parts, until the twelve poems were published together in (1891). The poems combine history, dramatic effect and the kind of sadness which Tennyson was famous for. Time had changed, and Tennyson is the poet who followed that change through the Victorian age.

### **Robert Browning :**

The master of the dramatic monologue form in the Victorian age was the other major poet of the period, Robert Browning. 'My Last Duchess' [duchess= noble lady] is one of the most famous of all such poems. It appeared in (1842), in a volume called *Dramatic Lyrics*-repeating the use of the word lyric again.

Many of Browning's dramatic monologues contain moments of violence, of hidden emotions under the surface. They show many of the sides of Victorian society and behavior which were normally not seen. Browning became famous when he ran off with Elizabeth Barrett, who was also a poet. They went to live in Italy for many years. Elizabeth Barrett Browning was the best-known female poet of the century. Her *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (1850) are love poems to her husband, and her *Aurora Leigh* (1857) is a long poem on women's themes, sometimes considered a Victorian feminist text.

Here is an example from *Sonnets from the Portuguese*:

If **thou** must love me, let it be for **nough**  
Except for love's sake only. Don't say  
I love her for her smile- her look- her way  
Of speaking gently,-'

**Thou:** you , **nought:** nothing .

Many of Robert Browning's poems are set in Italy, which he loved, including his long poem in twelve books, *The Ring and The Book*. It tells a murder story from different points of view in a collection of dramatic monologues. *Dramatic Personae* (1864) is probably his best-known collection. In Britain, Browning's reputation was never as high as Tennyson's, perhaps because he lives in Italy.

**Matthew Arnold :**

Matthew Arnold wrote 'Dover Beach' – a short poem (thirty-seven lines) about the crisis of belief of his times. He had written many other poems, including the epic 'Balder Dead' about the death of a Viking God and 'The Scholar- Gipsy' [student traveller], a pastoral poem about the old University City of Oxford.

**Edward Lear :**

The British poet and painter known for his absurd wit, Edward Lear was born in (1812) and began his career as an artist at age 15. Lear's travel journals were published in several volumes as *The Illustrated Travels of a Landscape Painter*. Popular and respected in his day, Lear's travel books have largely been ignored in the twentieth century. Lear's poetry was popular but it was not serious in the same way. Lear became famous for his nonsense poems, often in a rhyming form called a limerick.

*Limerick* is a humorous short poem, with two long lines that rhyme with each other, followed by two short lines that rhyme with each other and ending with a long line that rhymes with the first two. *A book of Nonsense* was followed by many books of travel writings, then by three more volumes of nonsense in the (1870s). Lear's poems are still read and enjoyed by many readers.

The **Pre-Raphaelite group** of writers and artists used the idea of beauty to challenge the pessimistic mood of the times. Their paintings were full of beauty (sometimes they are called fleshly because so much of the human body was shown). But their enjoyment of the senses was important.

**Victorian Essays :**

Most writers of the Victorian period wrote for newspapers and magazines. Dickens, Thackeray and others also edited some of these magazines. Dickens encouraged authors like Elizabeth Gaskell to write for his magazines, and writings were published in *Household Words* [familiar words] and *All the Year Round* in the (1850s). The tradition continues today as writers and journalists write in newspapers and magazines about the issues of the present.

**Charles Lamb :**

The best-known essayist of the (1820s) was Charles Lamb. His *Essays of Elia* were written for the London magazine and published in a book form in (1832). Lamb's essays gave him very high reputation, but he was more a social observer than a critic, carrying on the tradition of Addison and Steele, rather than the critical tradition of Doctor Johnson in the previous century.

**William Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt :**

Hazlitt is an English writer and critic, best known for his essays and lectures. He expressed strong, often harsh, opinions especially about other writers. His best known works include *Characters of Shakespeare's plays* and *Spirit of the Age*. His friends, who already included Charles Lamb, William Wordsworth, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, encouraged his ambitions as a painter; yet in (1805) he turned to metaphysics and the study of philosophy that had attracted him earlier, publishing his first book, *On the Principles of Human Action*.

William Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt are more serious critics of literature and society. Hazlitt's *Spirit of the Age* was an important book, and his essays on writers, such as *English Comic*

*Writers*, and his *Political Essays* had many readers. Hazlitt was a critic who described rather than analysed his subjects, but he was an important figure in the literature of his time.

Leigh Hunt helped Keats, Tennyson and Charles Lamb to have their early work published, and in his essays wanted to support writers and their works.

He wrote for many magazines, from (1808) until the (1850s).

The most important were published in the magazines *The Companion* and *The Tatler* between (1828) and (1832). The best-known collection is *Men, Women and Books*, which appeared in (1847).

With Lamb and Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt opened the way for much Victorian critical writing.

Literature was, for all these critics, a positive force for the good of society. This was criticism for pleasure rather than the more serious criticism which later came from writers like Thomas Carlyle and Matthew Arnold.

Arnold was an English poet and critic, son of Thomas Arnold. He wrote several collections of poetry, and important essays about education and social and political life in Britain. His best-known poems are *Dover Beach* and *The scholar -Gypsy*. For many years his criticism was considered more important than his poetry, but now perhaps they are equally highly regarded.

*Culture and Anarchy* and the two volumes of *Essays in Criticism* are important because they helped to form the taste of generations of readers. For Arnold, culture was 'sweetness and light' and was an important defence against anarchy or the breakdown of society: he believed that culture is all that is best in civilization, and this idea remained an important one for many years.

### **Walter Pater :**

Pater was an English critic, essayist, and humanist whose advocacy of "art for art's sake" became a cardinal doctrine of the movement known as Aestheticism. Pater has been called the father of aestheticism. His *Studies in the History of Renaissance* continued Ruskin's work of art history and criticism. He was a writer of memorable lines and his *Studies* include a famous essay on Leonardo da Vinci's picture *Mona Lisa* where he described her as one 'who has learned the secrets of the grave'.

His novels and his essays were read by his students at Oxford where he was teacher.

Many writers were influenced by Pater, and his belief in beauty became a central part of the aesthetic movement of the (1880s). There is a growing social sense in the essays of major writers as the Victorian age moves towards its close.

The playwright and novelist Oscar Wilde wrote, for example, *The Soul of Man under Socialism* in (1891). Even the title shows a very clear move away from the essays of literary appreciation which were popular in the (1820s) and (1830s).

The world was changing, and there was a much more serious tone in most of the essays and novels of the final years of the century than there had been before the Victorian age began.

### **1890s :**

Oscar Wilde is the most important writer in the final years of the nineteenth century.

He became a figure of fashion, a dandy, in the (1880s), long before he became famous as a writer of stories and plays. Also, he wrote fables for children that show a concern with appearance and reality which is central to all his writings. Wilde's great period of success began with the first of four comic plays, *Lady Windermere's Fan* in (1892).



Again appearance and reality are questioned, as the past of the main female character is discovered, although the whole play is highly comic.

### **Other Fiction :**

In the Victorian age, many writers wrote books for young readers. Ever since Robinson Crusoe and Gulliver's Travels in the eighteenth century, some books had been considered children's books, although they were originally written for adult readers.

But now, as more young people, especially in the middle classes, could read novels were written for them. Often these novels had a tone of instruction, and a moral, but sometimes they were simply enjoyable stories.

*The Water Babies* by Charles Kingsley is one of the most famous moral stories of the time.

It was a favourite of Queen Victoria's and she read it to her grandchildren. One of the books which has been popular with both children and adults is Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Carroll, whose real name was Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, taught mathematics at Oxford University. He wrote the book for the daughter of a friend, the original Alice.

Carroll plays with reality, language and logic in ways that are both comic and frightening.

He is sometimes seen as one of the first modern writers, for example in this moment when Alice is told to keep running in order to stay in the same place:

Now, here, you see, it takes all the running you can do,  
To stay in the same place. If you want to get somewhere  
Else, you run at least twice as fast as that

This kind of writing was sometimes called fantasy. Many other kinds of fantasy writing are now popular, but in the nineteenth century what is now known as science fiction was just beginning.

### **Drama :**

In the early years of the Victorian period, drama was not considered part of serious literature. Melodramas and farces were the main types of play produced until, in the (1850s), Tom Robertson began to write 'cup and saucer' dramas. These, as the name suggests, brought some realism into the presentation, the acting and the themes of the drama. Although Oscar Wilde was the most successful playwright of the (1890s), the plays of Sir Arthur Wing Pinero were also very popular. He wrote comedies like *The Magistrate*, but it was *The Second Mrs Tanqueray* which showed his social concern. Like the novels of Hardy and George Moore, and like Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan*, this play examines the double standards of the time, especially in relation to a woman's past and her possibly scandalous behavior. The end of century looked back at the Victorian age, and did not particularly like what it saw: compromise, double standards, the bad treatment of the poor, very slow progress towards democracy, problems in the colonies. The past did not look happy – but the future was not particularly promising either.

### **Lecture-**

9

### **The Twentieth Century to 1939 :**

In (1900) the economy of Britain had become mostly industrial and in (1911) nearly 70 per cent of the 25 million people in the country lived in cities. A village way of life had almost disappeared. In the (1900) the British Empire had grown to include many parts of the world. However, the Boer War in South Africa was not a successful war for the British. Colonies throughout the world began to rebel and British control of other countries began to

disappear. These were years of change. The First World War (1914- 18) changed for many people their view of the world. Millions of men, including very young soldiers, were killed. The loss of so many lives was a horror the country hadn't experienced before, and for many people there seemed to be no purpose to the war. Basic religious and political beliefs were questioned by more people. Communism grew in Russia, and fascism grew, especially in Germany and Italy. The rise of fascism in Germany happened at the same time as Germany became a very powerful nation and fascist beliefs were a main cause of the Scotland World War. Also workers in large industries became more interested in socialism and joined trades unions. The British Labour party grew; women were allowed to vote for the first time in (1928) . In the arts, one clear change was that artist felt they had to express their ideas very differently in new forms, which were difficult for everyone to understand. On the other hand, some artist felt a duty to communicate simply and in popular forms to a wider and better educated audience.

### **The Novel (1900-93) :**

The novel of Victorian period had social themes. The novel of the 20<sup>th</sup>-c has more personal, individual themes. But at the same time as the novel examines the problems of the individual, it also becomes an examination of the whole world. England is no longer the main scene- many writers use the wider world, outside England, as their setting. Often England is seen in contrast with the other countries described. Writers began to use different points of view, rather than seeing the world through only one character's eyes. The many points of view, the range of settings and quick moves from scene to scene all became part of modern writing. The stream of consciousness technique, named by the American psychologist William James, became an important part of novelist's techniques in the early 20<sup>th</sup>-c.

William James, though born in America, became a British citizen later in his early life. His novels move from America to Europe in a search for fixed cultural and social values. From his early novels in the (1870s) and (1880s), James moved on to write three of his masterpieces in England in the early years of the new century. These were *The Wings of the Dove* [dove= bird of peace] (1902), *The Ambassadors* (1903) and *The Golden Bowl* (1904). All three are national in their themes, contrasting the American culture and character with the European. Like most of James's writing, the language and the plot are very complex and very subtle.

### **Joseph Conrad :**

Joseph Conrad, like James, was not born in England, but in the Ukraine, of polish parents. He became a British subject in (1886). He travelled the world as a sailor, and this gave him ideas for many of his works. *Lord Jim* (1900) and *Nostromo* (1904) are two of his most typical novels. They are both novels of the sea, and they explore the dangers, the questions of honour and the moral conflicts of man's struggles at sea. *Nostromo* is about weakness and corruption, in which the characters go through a voyage of self-discovery. The novel is set in an imaginary country in South America, during a revolution, and its main character, *Nostromo*, become obsessed by silver. This eventually destroys his relations with others and makes him lose his moral responsibilities. One of Conrad's famous works is the short novel *Heart of Darkness*(1902), which goes deep into Africa to explore the mysteries of human behavior.

Both James and Conrad were named as part of the Great Tradition by the critic F. R. Leavis in (1948), along with such earlier writers as Austen and George Eliot. This judgment has been widely discussed as, for Leavis, one of the most important features of a novelist's work is moral authority. James and Conrad were certainly trying to define the moral codes of the new century.

#### **D. H. Lawrence :**

D. H. Lawrence was the first important writer to come from the working class after the Education Act of (1870) brought education to all. His early works are about his own background: a mining family in the East Midlands, with a strong mother and a father he hardly knew. *Sons and lovers* (1913) is an autobiographical novel as well as the best-known of his works with this setting, and is one of the most successful psychological novels of the century. Lawrence was always an outsider, first because of class, then later at the time of the First World War, because he was married to a German woman. After (1919) he spent most of his life outside England, travelling all over the world, and writing about many of the countries he visited, including Australia and Mexico. Lawrence produced a great many works: he wrote poetry, essays, plays, many short stories, travel writings and criticism. His interests include psychology, primitive religions and the nature of spiritual existence. Lawrence was interested in the journey of the human soul to truth and knowledge through contact with the deepest forces of spirituality.

#### **Virginia Woolf:**

Woolf came from a literary family, and her home in Bloomsbury became the center of literary interest among the intellectuals and artists of her time – Bloomsbury Group was last for many years from its beginnings in (1905-6), and was at its highest point in the 1920s. Woolf's first novel was *The Voyage Out* (1915). It was followed by *Night and Day* (1919). Then, in the great literary year (1922), she published *Jacob's Room*. It was the first of her novels to use the impressionistic technique which were to make her famous. She wanted to leave realism, and move into a new kind of impression which would allow a more internal exploration of the events and emotions described.